

**DIPLOMATIC SECURITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S. DIPLOMACY**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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DIPLOMATIC SECURITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. DIPLOMACY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Akaka.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. I call this hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia to order. I want to say aloha and welcome to our witnesses. Thank you so much for being here today.

This Subcommittee held a hearing in 2009 to examine staffing and management challenges at the State Department's Diplomatic Security Bureau (DS) which protects State Department employees and property worldwide. Today's hearing will build on the previous hearing, as well as examine the results of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of diplomatic security training challenges.

Since the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa, the Bureau's mission has expanded dramatically to meet the State Department's evolving security needs. With our military planning to withdraw its remaining 50,000 troops from Iraq by the year's end, diplomatic security will face an unprecedented challenge.

The Bureau will be responsible for many security and protective functions now performed by the military such as clearing improvised explosive devices and defending a U.S. post against rocket and mortar attacks.

In addition, the Bureau is expected to implement a State Department recommendation to provide high threat awareness training to all employees in both high and critical threat posts. This would require the Bureau to train 10,000 employees per year, five times the number for 2010. The Bureau's responsibilities will continue to expand with the planned troop reductions in Afghanistan.

As we deploy more civilian Federal employees to support democratic reform and self-governance in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other

high threat areas, it is very critical that Diplomatic Security have the training, resources, and support needed to protect them.

The Government Accountability Office report released today makes clear that DS is doing a remarkable job preparing its people to provide robust security in an unpredictable environment. But I do want to highlight a major concern that GAO raises.

GAO's report finds that diplomatic security training facilities are inadequate. The Bureau is using 16 different leased, rented, or borrowed facilities. In some of these sites, the Bureau's training needs are not a priority, which increases costs and leads to training delays. Also, some facilities are too small or in need of repair. Although the Bureau is in the process of selecting a site to build a consolidated training facility, this will take years to complete.

Another significant concern that I have, which I asked the Bureau to address today, is how it oversees its large contractor workforce. As Diplomatic Security provides security in more high threat areas, the Bureau grows increasingly reliant on contract staff. Contractors make up about 90 percent of its total workforce. This requires the Bureau to train its workforce and contract oversight in addition to physical and personal security.

The 2007 Blackwater shooting that killed 17 Iraqi civilians while protecting a State convoy reminds us that DS contractors, particularly those acting as bodyguards, must be held to the highest standards for training and accountability because the stakes are tremendously high.

I also look forward to hearing about what steps the Bureau has taken to address key issues raised at the Subcommittee's 2009 hearing. I am particularly interested in the Bureau's progress in addressing language proficiency shortfalls and staffing gaps, balancing the need to provide strong security with carrying out the diplomatic mission, and improving its strategic planning, which is important for targeting limited resources in this budget climate.

I know that Ambassador Boswell and his team are working hard to address these challenges. I look forward to hearing about the Bureau's efforts, as well as discussing ways we can work together to move forward. I thank our witnesses for being here today to discuss these critical issues.

I look forward to hearing from our first panel of witnesses and welcome them here today. Ambassador Eric Boswell, the Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, and Jess Ford, the Director of International Affairs and Trade at the Government Accountability Office.

I understand that Mr. Ford is retiring on Friday after 38 years of Federal service, and this will be his last time testifying before this Subcommittee. Over the years, Mr. Ford has done extensive work on improving State Department operations and management of American embassies, and we certainly will miss him. The GAO informed us that you have testified before this Subcommittee more than any other GAO staffer.

This Subcommittee has placed great value and trust in your work, and it is with great appreciation, Mr. Ford, that I say mahalo nui loa, thank you very much for your years of valuable service with GAO, and I wish you success in your future endeavors.

As you know, it is the custom of this Subcommittee to swear in all witnesses and I ask both of you to stand and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give this Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Mr. BOSWELL. I do.

Mr. FORD. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let it be noted for the record that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Before we start, I want you to know that your full written statements will be made a part of the record, and I would also like to remind you to please limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes.

Ambassador Boswell, it is always good to have you, please proceed with your statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ERIC J. BOSWELL,¹ ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BOSWELL. Thank you, Senator Akaka. I am honored to appear before you today.

I would like to thank you and the Subcommittee Members for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's programs. This support enables Diplomatic Security to safeguard American diplomats and facilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, while also maintaining our robust investigative programs which serve to protect the U.S. borders and our presence overseas.

DS's training program is at the core of our readiness to fulfill these missions. So with your permission, I will make a brief statement. As I have stated before this Subcommittee in the past, DS continues to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of America's foreign policy.

I must reiterate that the scope and scale of our responsibilities and authorities have grown immensely in response to emerging threats and security incidents. Significant resources are necessary if we are to meet the requirements of securing our diplomatic facilities in the extremely high threat environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, Mexico, as well as other dangerous locations worldwide.

The Department now operates diplomatic missions in places where, in the past, we likely would have closed the post and evacuated all personnel when faced with similar threats. However, the need to conduct diplomacy in the post-September 11, 2001 environment is essential to our Nation's security.

To meet our challenges now and in the future, DS personnel and resources have grown and evolved. We are engaged in an intensive recruitment campaign. We have increased our outreach to colleges and universities with an eye toward building a professional service that reflects America's diversity.

As a result of our ambitious recruitment efforts, we have reduced our vacancy rate. This expansion has also changed the require-

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Boswell appears in the appendix on page 27.

ments for training our people. DS training has progressed tremendously in the past several years. The GAO review of DS training accurately reflects the success of our Training Directorate despite the challenges we face.

To ensure that the personnel we deploy are highly qualified, we carefully evaluate our training programs. By incorporating student feedback, we can offer the highest quality instruction to new and existing DS personnel. This evaluation process helps to verify that the training offered is relevant to the new realities of the Department's mission.

It also ensures that DS personnel are prepared to assume increasing security responsibilities in high threat and other challenging environments. However, as noted in the recent GAO report, existing DS training facilities and instructor resources are now at maximum student capacity and capabilities. A new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) would expand and improve the delivery of DS training for U.S. Government employees.

Personnel serving in contingency zones must not only be trained and prepared to assume the increasing security responsibilities, but also have the necessary support services available to them both during and after their assignment to high-stress posts.

The Department fully realizes that when one of its employees serves in a high-threat environment, the employee's whole family serves with him or her in one form or another. A full array of services is available to these personnel and their families from medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and others. I want to assure the Subcommittee that we are paying attention to all personnel who have been or could be affected by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and addressing any issues early on to help those persons in need.

The Department uses private security contractors (PSCs), to assist in meeting security staffing requirements in critical threat and non-permissive environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result of operational changes already implemented and reviewed during the conduct of the Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), the Department is able to provide proper management, oversight, and operational control of the PSCs it has deployed overseas.

The Worldwide Protective Services (WPS) contract awarded in September 2010 incorporated essential lessons learned to ensure that PSCs contracted by the Department perform their activities in a professional, responsible, culturally sensitive, and cost-effective manner.

DS continues to explore ways to provide innovative security blueprints to help implement our national foreign policy priorities. We must continue to develop a cadre of DS personnel who can think creatively to propose solutions, who can speak the language, and who can work closely and cooperatively with their embassy colleagues to succeed without sacrificing safety and security.

In conclusion, I want to assure the Subcommittee that DS is fully prepared to provide the secure platform and environment the Department of State needs to meet the challenging diplomatic responsibilities we face in this ever-changing world.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. With your continued support, we will ensure that diplomatic security remains a valuable and effective resource for protecting our people, our information, and our infrastructure around the world.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your statement. Mr. Ford, please proceed with your statement.

STATEMENT OF JESS T. FORD, DIRECTOR,¹ INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to start by thanking you for your kind comments regarding my lengthy career at GAO. Thirty-eight years is a long time, but I am looking forward to retirement.

I am pleased to be here today to discuss training efforts of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the State Department. My testimony is based on our report which is being released today. Diplomatic Security is responsible for the protection of people, information, and property at over 400 embassies, consulates, and domestic locations.

And as we have reported in previous testimony, they have an expanded mission and they have had a significant growth in their budget and personnel over the last decade. Diplomatic Security trains its workforce and others to address a variety of threats, including crime, espionage, visa/passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism.

To meet its training needs, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on its training center, which is part of its Training Directorate, and it is the primary provider of diplomatic security training activities. Diplomatic Security's training budget has grown steadily from Fiscal Year 2006 to 2010 from approximately \$24 million to \$70 million.

Today I am going to talk a little bit about the two main issues in our report, the first having to do with the quality of Diplomatic Security's training and the appropriateness of its training and the extent to which it ensures that training requirements are met; and second, I am going to talk a little bit about the challenges currently facing Diplomatic Security.

We reported that DS has had to meet the challenge of training more personnel to perform additional duties, while still getting its agents, engineers, technicians, and other staff into the field where they are needed. DS has largely met this challenge by maintaining high standards for its training.

Specifically, DS incorporated Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) standards into its operating procedures, and is the first government organization to be accredited by FLETA standards.

Certain issues, however, have constrained the effectiveness of some DS training activities. In our report, we noted that DS lacks a comprehensive system to evaluate the overall effectiveness of

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Ford appears in the appendix on page 37.

some of its training, particularly online training which is growing in significance in terms of activity there.

Second, we said that DS has not been able to accurately track the overall training of all the people who take training. To some extent, this is an issue with non-State staff who have been training in certain courses that are required when they are stationed overseas in dangerous locations. We made a couple of recommendations to improve the systems and State has agreed with both of them.

Our report also identifies other challenges facing DS. First, DS must train diplomatic security personnel to perform new missions in Iraq as they take over responsibilities that heretofore have been performed by the U.S. military.

DS has had little or no experience in providing certain types of training activity that the military currently is responsible for, such as how to deal with downed aircraft, explosive ordnance disposal, and rocket and mortar countermeasures, among others. Because of this increased security responsibility, DS anticipates that it is going to have to rely heavily on contractors to carry out these types of responsibilities.

DS officials noted that the additional training that will be needed will likely increase their need to put more people into the field. Any delays in finalizing State's expanded mission in Iraq could also affect DS's ability to develop and deliver any types of additional training.

A second major challenge that we identified in our report has to do with the increasing requirements laid out in the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. In essence, the review calls for DS to significantly increase training for staff posted to more high threat and critical posts.

The numbers in our report suggest that they would have to increase training from 23 to 178 posts, and that the number of students that might have to be trained for high-threat posts could increase, as you noted in your opening statement, from 2,000 to 10,000. This would have significant implications for DS in terms of its budget and its training requirements.

Finally, the issue that you identified in your statement and our third challenge in our report has to do with DS's training facilities. Currently, they have a highly decentralized set of training facilities. You mentioned the 16 that we have in our report.

We found that many of these are substandard and have a number of inadequacies. Our report details a number of examples where DS is unable to effectively deliver realistic training because of shortfalls in these facilities.

Recognizing that these existing facilities are inadequate, DS has proposed establishing a consolidated training center. They are currently looking at two potential sites. They have been provided approximately \$136 million to help develop these sites. However, it is unclear what the total cost of building such a site will be, and it is also uncertain when the site might be available. So we have some concerns in the short term about how DS is going to be able to meet this increasing mission.

Mr. Chairman, I think I am going to stop here and answer any questions you might have.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Ford. I thank both of you for your statements.

Let me start with a question for Ambassador Boswell. Ambassador, President Obama recently announced plans to withdraw 33,000 troops from Afghanistan by next summer, and fully transition security responsibilities to the Afghan people by 2014. I support these plans and look forward to welcoming home our brave troops.

As you know, many diplomats and Federal civilian employees will continue to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan after the troop withdrawals. I worry about the degree of risk we are asking them to undertake.

What planning is underway to make sure that DS will be fully prepared to protect diplomats and U.S. civilian personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan as the military withdraws?

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. We are engaged, we the Department of State and DS, are engaged in a marathon of planning. I think that is the right way to describe it. It is probably the planning for the transition in Iraq is probably the most complex planning effort ever undertaken by the State Department and perhaps one of the most complicated civilian planning efforts ever taken by the U.S. Government.

We have been working on it for years. We think we have a very good planning structure set up and we think we have a good plan, and the short answer to your question, sir, is that I think we will be in a position to provide the security for our people in Iraq after December 31st of this year when all U.S. troops will be gone from the country.

Having said that, as I said, it is a very complex and difficult task. We are going to be dramatically increasing the number of security personnel at posts in Iraq, and we will be increasing also the use of contractors, in part for some of the things you mentioned and Mr. Ford mentioned, certain functions and activities that are not mainstream Department of State functions, and where we are taking over functions now provided by the U.S. military.

We think we have the structure in place to do it. I should make the point that combat operations in Iraq ceased over a year ago. U.S. military combat operations in Iraq ceased over a year ago. We have been providing security to our very large U.S. embassy in Bagdad for over a year without any assistance from the military beyond certain very specialized functions, and we expect to be able to continue to do that.

You asked about Afghanistan, also, sir. Obviously, we are not there yet. There is not a transition yet. The President has just announced the beginning of a drawdown in Afghanistan. But I can assure you that we have learned a lot in the planning process for Iraq and we will apply those lessons in Afghanistan.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ambassador, as the military withdraws from Iraq and later Afghanistan, DS will provide certain security and protective services that the military is performing now such as downed aircraft recovery and explosive ordnance disposal. However, the military provides many services such as intelligence collection and providing a visible deterrence in ways that DS cannot.

How will the loss of these important capabilities affect the way DS provides security in Iraq and Afghanistan? And is DS equipped to handle all of the functions it will be asked to assume?

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, I was in Iraq several years ago and the security situation in Iraq now, I think it is fair to say, is infinitely better than it was at the worst of times, 2005 to 2007. You are right, sir, in saying that certain key functions of the U.S. military will be absent. They cannot be replaced by DS, notably counter-rocket fire. There is not an offensive unit in DS. Some intelligence functions as well.

As Iraq normalizes as a Nation, we are going to rely, as we do in most countries, on the Iraqi forces and the Iraqi police for these functions to the maximum extent that we can.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Ford, in 2009, GAO recommended that State conduct a strategic review of Diplomatic Security's mission, budget, and personnel as part of State's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. While State agreed with the recommendation, the QDDR did not include this strategic review. Will you please discuss how inadequate strategic planning may affect the DS operations?

Mr. FORD. Yes, Mr. Chairman, let me respond to that. First of all, I can say that we were disappointed that the QDDR did not take a more strategic look at DS operations. Our 2009 report noted that DS has been required to expand the number of missions that it is asked to support by the Department overall and that they are often put into what I would characterize as a reactionary posture which we do not think is good from a planning point of view, and our goal of that 2009 report was that the Department would take a longer look at DS and come up with a more strategic way of assessing needs, resources, and requirements.

I think I can say that our current report, which is focused on the training part of DS, suggests that there still seems, in my mind, to be a gap here. DS is certainly trying to respond to all the new missions that are laid on them.

We just discussed the Iraq and Afghanistan situations that are coming up, and the fact that their training facilities are not up to speed. How they are going to be able to, at least in the short term, respond to the likely increased growth in training capability that they are going to have to develop.

A lot of those kind of issues, in my mind, could have been included in a strategic review. So I think from our perspective, we still would like to see the Department take a broader view of DS in order to give them a little more lead time in figuring out what their needs are.

I think certainly the issue of human capital, the capabilities of people to do contract oversight, those type of issues are the kind of issues that DS is going to be faced with over the next couple of years. The Department needs to, in our view, do a more comprehensive review of what they need. So as far as we are concerned, that recommendation has not been fully enacted by the Department.

Senator AKAKA. Let me followup with a question to Ambassador Boswell. Ambassador, DS faces unprecedented challenges as it takes on new responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan while continuing to protect U.S. diplomats worldwide. To meet these chal-

lenges, DS must use its limited resources strategically. What steps has the Bureau taken to develop a strategic plan?

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, as a result of the recommendation in the GAO report—the GAO report of 2009 had basically two recommendations on strategic planning. One was the Department, as Mr. Ford has just said, should look at DS in a strategic manner. And the second one was that DS should improve its own strategic planning.

I certainly agree with that. We have put together a strategic planning unit which is very closely linked to our budget process, and which I meet with every 6 months, and my senior leadership meets with much more often than that. It has been extremely helpful, in various ways, to the way we do our business and the way we look forward. And I think this is an initiative that is working successfully.

In terms of the broader question that Mr. Ford just raised, we will certainly take that back with us again to the Department. The QDDR, which was Secretary Clinton's signature initiative when she came to the Department, was a strategic review, but it was not a strategic review at DS. It was a strategic review overall and implementation of the various recommendations, including a couple that have been mentioned in testimony here, is ongoing.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, DS performs many important roles in addition to protecting State Department employees and embassies, including providing protective details to foreign dignitaries and supporting security at international special events.

In November, Hawaii will be hosting the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders meeting. What plans does DS have in place to provide security and protective services at the APEC meeting?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, DS is very extensively involved in the planning for APEC which, as you said, will take place this fall. It has been designated as a national security special event by the White House. The lead agency is the U.S. Secret Service which is appropriate given the number of heads of State that will be visiting.

But DS will also have a major presence in Honolulu. We have a lot of protectees in association with the APEC meeting, foreign ministers, for example, and others, and we will be working—have been and will be working very, very closely with the Secret Service and the local authorities and other Federal agencies as well to have a good, successful, safe event.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Mr. Ford, as I mentioned in my statement, GAO found that DS has inadequate training facilities. The Bureau currently uses 16 different facilities for training, some of which are overcrowded or need repair. While DS has developed an interim training facility, your report suggests that it is not adequate to support all of the Bureau's training needs, especially with the Iraq transition.

Would you please elaborate on the effects of these inadequate training facilities?

Mr. FORD. Yes. There are several issues that we identified in our report regarding the condition of the facilities. Some of them have to do with access—whether or not the Department can get access to certain types of training.

The one that we cited in our report had to do with heavy firearms training that they currently provide down at Quantico Marine Base, and the issue there is DS does not—because it is a Marine Base, they have to kind of schedule their training around the Marines' needs, which does not necessarily always correspond to the needs and requirements of the Department. So there is an access issue that they have to address.

Other facilities that we visited, they just are not realistic in terms of the type of structures that are there to carry out the type of training that DS is trying to provide to staff. It is really, in this case, I would call it a realism problem.

In the report, we cite a case where they are trying to simulate conditions of entering a facility and how to enter it in a secure manner, and their training space did not have walls so they basically used tape on the floor to simulate where a wall would be. That is not very realistic.

At other facilities where they train with light arms firearms, we found that some of the firearms lanes were not adequate to their needs. So there are some issues with regard to just the physical infrastructure and whether they have the capacity there to effectively carry out the type of training they need to carry out.

And then the second issue, and the one I mentioned earlier, has to do with whether or not the facilities that are currently inadequate, whether they are going to be able to expand their training mission with all the new people that they have to train to do the Iraq and Afghanistan missions, and potentially the QDDR requirement, if they have to implement that fully, it is not clear to us whether the current facilities that they have will allow them to have that capacity to even do the training. So that is the second issue that we are concerned about.

And then that third issue has to do with their goal of creating a consolidated training center; it's years down the road before that facility may be up and running. So there is an interim period here where it is not clear to us whether DS will have the capabilities, with the current facilities that they have and the shortcomings they have, to be able to effectively carry out all the training they need to do.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, I would like to hear from you on that issue as well. Will you please discuss how DS is coping with these challenges and how the Bureau will meet its expanding training needs until a consolidated facility is operational?

Mr. BOSWELL. Yes, sir. Let me start by saying I completely agree with everything that Mr. Ford said, and I welcome that conclusion. In fact, I welcome all the conclusions of the GAO report, but particularly that one because that is close to our heart in DS. The problems he described are real.

We have long needed and long sought a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, as well call it. We have been in the process for years of trying to obtain such a facility. We have obtained startup funding for such a facility. We went through an extensive process with the General Services Administration (GSA), which is the U.S. Government's real estate czar, with the General Services Administration to identify sites for such a facility within a reasonable distance of Washington, DC.

We had a look of, I think, well over 40 possible—we solicited first interest from other government agencies, the private sector, et cetera, et cetera. We look at about 40 sites. I think it may have been a little bit more. We ended up, after a very long process with the GSA, settling on one particular site on the eastern shore of Maryland.

Unfortunately, last year, that came a cropper, came a cropper because of local opposition to the site. It is one of the problems that we have. To do all the facilities, to do all the training that we have to do, we need a pretty large site and it is hard to find a large site that is appropriately configured within reasonable distance of Washington, DC. So we basically had to go back to the beginning and start over.

This process is ongoing. We are closing in, I think you could say, on a site. We have had to change our criteria a little bit to permit us to look a little further out from Washington.

That is a little bit of a problem for us because while it makes the choice, the selection of sites a little bit easier, it also means that since it is beyond simple driving range, that our trainees will have to overnight and that means the construction of dorms and other facilities, cafeterias, such things, so that adds a little bit to the cost. But we are closing in on a site and hope to have something to announce in the coming months.

But we absolutely, absolutely require this site. As Mr. Ford has said, we are spread out over a range of facilities now, and the biggest problem we have with that, aside from the dispersal, is that we do not own any of these facilities. So we run into the problems that he described. These are joint use facilities. We are sort of tenants in some way and it causes a problem for us.

I am going on a little too long, Mr. Chairman, but I want to cover the question. It is a long question. How do we do our training in the interim? We are years ago, even if we get a site. We are years ago from having a full-fledged training facility. And we are going to have to continue to do what we are doing and what Mr. Ford and the GAO saw. We are going to have to continue to make do flexibly and with some imagination with what we have.

Now, as for the requirement and the recommendation in the QDDR, our Foreign Affairs Training Center be expanded well beyond what is offered now, that is a real conundrum for us. We would have to have a new facility to do that. We would simply not be able to do it without a new facility.

There is a real question. The figure of expanding and the number of trainees from 2,000 to 10,000 is sort of an outer-outer figure. I cannot imagine that we would ever, even with a new facility, be training 10,000 people a year. We are working now with the Policy Planning staff of the State Department to decide what high-threat posts really should get this kind of training.

Right now we give the training going to the war zones, Afghanistan and Pakistan—Afghanistan and Iraq, and we also give it to people going to Pakistan, to Yemen, to Sudan, and more recently, to the Mexican border posts which have become a much more dangerous place to work than in the past. We will certainly have to add some posts to that, which will bring up the numbers, but I do not think we are ever going to get to 10,000.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you, Ambassador, in your testimony, you mentioned the implementation of specialized security immersion training costs for personnel assigned to Iraq. Will you please describe what this cost entails, including whether it involves foreign language training?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, the FACT course, which is what you are talking about, is a course that is 5 days long. It does not address language training. It is a course that provides some skills to—it is not designed for DS agents. It is designed for regular government employees, Foreign Service people and those from other agencies who are going to high-threat areas.

And it goes into such things as first aid, primary first aid. It goes into surveillance detection. It goes into how to drive a car in a high-threat area. It goes into—basically, it tries to prepare people for what they are going to encounter when they are in Iraq or Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador Boswell, as you know, foreign language skills are critical to carrying out the diplomatic mission, including security operations. I am pleased that the percent of regional security officers (RSOs) who fulfill the language requirements for their positions has increased since 2009. Will you please discuss what actions State has taken or still plans to take to continue increasing language proficiency among RSOs?

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to answer that question. By way of background, I had this same job 10 years ago and 10 years ago, I can say that very, very few RSO positions overseas were language designated, which means required language training. I come back to the job after an absence of 10 years and I find that two-thirds of RSO positions are language designated, or something like two-thirds are language designated, and I think that is a very, very positive step in the right direction.

I cannot tell you how valuable it is to see RSOs speaking the native language. I was just in Poland and watching my RSO there yammer away with his Polish counterparts in very fluent Polish. That is something we would not have seen 10 years ago.

So I completely support language training for DS agents. GAO identified a problem a couple of years ago, as you mentioned, which was that too low a proportion of language-designated RSO positions overseas were filled by people who had not tested up to the required level of that language.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, we are much improved in the ensuing 2 years. I think in 2009, it was 47 percent of positions were held by language qualified officers, which meant 53 percent were not. Now we are above 60 percent being filled. We are being extremely tough on language waivers, which is the way you go without the language, and we think those numbers are going way up and are going to continue to go way up.

You have my personal commitment. I have made it to the Director-General of the Foreign Service who holds the whip hand over me on this, that we are going to do everything we possibly can to make sure that we have full language compliance.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for that commitment.

Mr. Ford, as you stated in your testimony, GAO found weaknesses in the Bureau's training systems such as not obtaining feed-

back from all training participants and not tracking all individuals who receive training. Please elaborate on why these weaknesses are important and how they may affect the Bureau's training.

Mr. FORD. A couple issues here. Well, first of all, to answer your question regarding why it is important to get feedback on training, I mean, at the end of the day, one of your quality assessments is whether or not the people that have the training find it useful in their jobs.

You need to know that so when you design or make any modifications to your training programs, you know what kind of changes to make instead of just guessing what works and what does not. So that is not unique to the State Department. That is a requirement that any training program ought to have.

Our concern really had to do with the systems that DS and the Department use to track feedback that they get on certain types of training, and to also track training requirements of people who have taken training to make sure that they have the requirements and they are meeting them when they are supposed to.

The current systems in place I would characterize as relatively ad hoc in the sense that they are using sort of like what I would personally use, spreadsheets to try to keep track of people versus an actual training management system that can track real time information, both in terms of getting feedback and also tracking requirements.

The Department is aware of this. DS talked to us about some efforts that they are currently discussing with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to use their tracking system. At the time we issued the report, I do not know if that had been resolved yet, but there was the potential that the FSI system could be a vehicle to help come up with a more systematic way of tracking requirements.

On the feedback loop, the issue there is a little more difficult because DS is increasingly using online training. It is a little difficult to track people who are going online just to know whether or not they have completed the training.

So it is an area in which we think some improvement could be made in the systems, and in both of these cases, we considered these recommendations to be management improvements versus cases of major deficiency. We do not think that is the case, but we do think that they need to have a more systematic process.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Ambassador Boswell, you testified that DS is working with State's Foreign Service Institute on a learning management system to provide tracking and feedback collection for training. Please elaborate on this plan. What capabilities do you expect to obtain from this system, and when do you expect these improvements to be completed?

Mr. BOSWELL. Senator, Mr. Chairman, let me say first that we are grateful to the GAO for pointing out these things. I think both recommendations regarding followup and feedback are good recommendations, and as Mr. Ford said, we are working on them.

But let me say also, right from the top, that we do get feedback. We do constantly evaluate our training, particularly our high-threat training or the training for the combat zones. We could do better, but we do it. For example, our FACT training course which

we were just discussing, the 5-day course, has been modified several times in response to suggestions from people going through it, suggestions from the field.

We send a team from training every year to the combat zones with the sole mission of evaluating the training by interviewing the people that do get trained and are now at posts. We have made a number of significant changes since then as a result of that.

We are working with the Foreign Service Institute to resolve some of the systematic tracking problems and feedback problems. The feedback problems, largely, have to do with problems getting feedback from folks, as Mr. Ford said, I think in his statement, folks from other agencies that cannot feed into our systems easily.

We are looking to find a way around that and we are still working on it. I am sure we are going to be able to resolve it.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ambassador, DS relies heavily on contractors to conduct its mission. Contractors represent over 92 percent of its workforce. Has DS conducted strategic workforce planning to determine whether the current workforce balance is appropriate? And will DS reassess this balance as its mission changes and expands?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, if I could clarify? The contractors you are talking about are largely, largely static guards at U.S. embassies overseas. We use contracts for static guards at every embassy. They are almost, without exception, contracts with local firms or direct hire of contractors that are local nationals.

The part of our contracting that has been controversial has been the use of contractors in the war zones where they are not largely local hires. We have had to go to third country and Americans because of difficulties vetting the local population in the war zones.

So of the contractor population that you just mentioned, the vast majority are in Paris or Cape Verde protecting our embassies. That is appropriate. It has been the way we have protected our embassies for years and I do not think we are going to change that.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we have not been able to go with that model for the reasons that I mentioned. The use of contractors, security contractors, and let us specify that we are talking about security contractors. The use of security contractors in those zones has been reviewed both internally in the Department extremely extensively, and also by outside organizations, notably the Commission on Wartime Contracting, which has been meeting continuous, which is a congressional commission which has been meeting for a year-and-a-half, at least.

I went to Iraq myself years ago, in 2007, in the wake of the horrible incident involving Blackwater contractors at Nisour Square which resulted in the deaths of a large number of innocent Iraqi civilians. I was sent not to investigate that. I was not a State Department employee at the time. I was part of a small group of so-called experts, outside experts that was brought in to look at how the State Department provides security in the war zone.

And one of the things we looked at was whether the use of contractors was the appropriate way to deal with it given all the circumstances, and we determined that there really was no reasonable alternative to the use of contractors, and every commission that I have ever heard of and every outside expert that we have

ever consulted has come to the same conclusion. So I do not see a radical change in that.

What I do hope, what I sincerely hope, Mr. Chairman, is that as things become more normal in Iraq over the years, and as things eventually, hopefully become more normal in Afghanistan, that we can revert to the use of local nationals for these functions.

We have started doing that in Iraq and we are being careful about doing it. We have Iraqi nationals integrated into our security forces in the north, in Erbil. That is the Kurdish area in the north, and we hope, ultimately, to be able to continue to do that and expand that to other sections.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador, two separate 2009 reports by State's Inspector General (IG) revealed that regional security officers were not receiving adequate training to prepare them for their contract oversight responsibilities. The IG also reported that contract oversight may not receive sufficient attention among the many responsibilities RSOs must fulfill. What is DS doing to address these issues?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, before I answer that question, let me correct something or clarify something I said in response to your last question, which is, I said contractors are used for local guard functions, static guard functions around the world, which is true. We also have a much smaller number of directly locally engaged staff, in other words, not contractors, that do that function. But it is a minority. Let us put it that way.

In terms of contract oversight, I think it is fair to say that if DS agents were not aware when they joined Diplomatic Security that they were going to become experts on contract oversight, they are now aware of it. It is a major function of our agents overseas.

I think out of, for example, the hundred-and-some-plus DS agents that will be in Iraq at the beginning of 2012 when security responsibilities transfer over to us or when the military responsibilities transfer over to us, I think about 80 of them will be doing contract oversight. They will be overseeing the contract forces, the contract guards and the bodyguards.

I should explain. There are two kinds of guards. One is the static guards and the other are what we call protective security details (PSD). These are the bodyguards, the movement people that travel in the motorcades, in fact, run the motorcades.

Our agents are getting extensive in-service training on contract oversight. Agents are contracting officer representatives at post overseas. They are assisted by other agents who are assistant contracting officer representatives. We also have another category of oversight of government technical monitors, which essentially are co-located with the guard camps, either physically co-located or visit them constantly and irregularly to make sure that things are well on the guard camps, and to assist the contracting officer's representatives in oversight of the contract.

The training is, as I say, very extensive and continuous and the on-the-job training is also very important.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ambassador, in response to shortcomings in contractor oversight, DS has created a new cadre of security protective specialists. What policies and training are in place

to make sure that these specialists can conduct effective oversight of security contractors?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, that is closely linked to the answer I gave you to the previous question. Our security protective specialists are a new kind of specialist in DS, in the State Department. They were started as a pilot program and rapidly evolved into a very significant DS—rapidly evolved away from a pilot to a full-fledged functioning DS program.

Special Protective Specialist (SPS), as they are called, are not full-fledged DS agents. DS agents are law enforcement people and they had 4 years of training, or largely 4 years of training, before they ever go overseas. And they do not only protective functions that we have been talking about here, but law enforcement functions, criminal investigations. They have badges, they have arrest powers, this sort of thing.

Security protective specialists are there solely to exercise direction and oversight of the contract guards during movements. In the wake of the Nisour Square incident, the commission that I was part of, or the committee that I was part of, we made 30 or 40 recommendations, almost all of which—I think all but one—were adopted by the State Department.

And one of the most important ones was that every motorcade—and nobody moves in Iraq without being in a motorcade of some sort. Every motorcade which is manned by contractors would have a DS agent in operational control of the motorcade.

All of a sudden it required the Department to hire a bunch more DS agents. It caused some of the other problems that you have touched on in the past, including the gaps in language training and things like that, because we had to get agents, a large number of agents, to Iraq and Afghanistan as well, to do this function.

Now we have hired or we have created this specialty so that it is not DS agents themselves, in many cases, that are doing this oversight. It is the security protective specialist contractors—not contractors—security protective specialists that do the operational direction.

Now, I have to clarify. They have nothing to do with contract administration. They are directing the motorcades. They are not contracting officer representatives or anything like that. They are simply in charge of the movements.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you Ambassador.

Mr. Ford, I would like to give you an opportunity as well to comment on the steps DS is taking to strengthen contract oversight. In your view, what best practices should DS consider to effectively manage a large contractor workforce?

Mr. FORD. Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of comments I would like to make. First, GAO currently has an ongoing engagement specifically looking at this issue with regard to contract oversight in Iraq. That team is in the early stages of the review, so I am not in a position to comment directly about what we are finding there.

I can comment a little bit more generically about the types of elements that should be considered in overseeing contractors in general, particularly in this area. Most of these are pretty well known, the first one having to do with having a strategic planning concept of how you are going to use these contractors, whether or not you

have the right skill sets, making a decision between whether or not these should be government positions versus non-government positions.

There are some situations when you really do not want to have a contractor acting in a governmental role. GAO has reported on that in several instances in the past.

The issue of oversight capacity is one that comes up frequently in GAO reviews, in general, and in relation to contractors. Risk management principles, we frequently have commented on the need to ensure that we are making the right kind of decisions in terms of the environments that we are going to be asking contractors to work in, and also that we have oversight mechanisms to deal with them. The issue regarding mobility in a dangerous place, obviously, it would be a risk mitigation issue that needs to be examined.

And then finally, I think the issue of having adequate staff resources to effectively oversee a large contracting contingent is critical. If you do not have enough people to conduct the oversight function, oftentimes the problems crop up. We find that time and again in the work we do on contracting.

So those type of elements need to be put in place. I think the Ambassador has touched on many of them in his comments. And so, the real issue is whether those elements are going to be all put in place in a timely basis, because the military is going to be out by the end of the year. I think that is a critical issue that we hope will be addressed, and our team is currently studying this issue. Hopefully we will be able to share more details on how the Department is responding to this problem.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador, in 2009, GAO found that approximately one-third of Diplomatic Security's domestic officers were operating with a vacancy rate of 25 percent or even higher. What are the current vacancy rates within DS for both domestic officers and overseas posts? And what steps is DS taking to address its staffing shortfall?

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Chairman, we are very grateful to the Congress for the support that we have had over the years, and particularly since September 11, 2001 and the great expand at the beginning of the intervention in Iraq. The support we have had from the Congress on a budgetary side, as all the testimony has shown so far, DS has dramatically expanded in size, dramatically expanded in size to go with dramatically expanded responsibilities.

We have an active recruiting campaign going on. We are going to be able to meet our recruiting goals for DS agents. We have never really had a problem with that. This is an attractive career to many people, a prestigious career to many people, and so we do not have problems attracting recruits.

In fact, one of the strong impressions I have from having been away for 10 years is the quality of the agents is even higher than it was. And I am very, very pleased with that.

We also had some recruiting shortfalls in certain areas. We have largely, I think, resolved them. The SPS area, which I was just talking about, I really, frankly, I was very worried that we would be able to attract the number of people to that specialty. These are

limited career appointments that we are talking about. But we expect to be able to fulfill our quota, if you like.

We also had some shortfalls on the engineering side. That is a very important part of DS. And we think we are going to be up to speed on that one as well. There is a sub-category of engineering called security technical specialist. We still have some work to do on that.

Our overall vacancy rate is 9 percent, which I think is an entirely defensible rate. I have to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that anybody that goes to our field offices in the States is often struck by the number of empty desks in those field offices. That is not due to a vacancy rate.

That is because our agents are in the field and really represent—I mean, we tell all agents when they come into DS not to have the wedding anniversary in September, not to have any children born in September, because everybody is going to be at the U.N. General Assembly, everybody in DS, by the hundreds, is going to be at the U.N. General Assembly and that is just what we do for that month.

So they come out of the field offices and you see a lot of empty desks. But we are rather satisfied with our—I think we are satisfied with our vacancy rate right now.

Senator AKAKA. Ambassador, I am pleased that State and DS are taking steps to better support employees and their families when officers serve in high-threat posts, such as raising awareness of psychological health issues and establishing peer support groups.

This will be especially important as more employees serve in so-called conflict zones. How is State and DS assessing the effectiveness of these efforts to make sure they meet the needs of employees and their families?

Mr. BOSWELL. Sir, this is an assessment that is done by DS and the Office of Medical Services and the Director-General of the Foreign Service as well. We have only been in combat zones since 2003, but in those 7 years, we have acquired a considerable amount of experience with employees working in zones of conflict.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we have learned a lot from the military who do this extremely well, as you know, sir. And we provide our employees with, I would say, a full menu of services, medical, doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other qualified medical personnel providing support. But we go well beyond that.

We have, for example, in DS, a peer support group, a peer to peer support group, agents working with agents to provide support for those coming out of the combat zones. We have a program—we the Department—has a program that mandates a high-threat outbreak, if you like, of anybody coming out of the combat zones, at which problems can be flagged and dealt with.

It is a very different experience for a Diplomatic Security agent to serve in Iraq supervising a motorcade, and then going on to be an RSO in Finland. So there is a cultural and emotional and job-type shift that goes on, and those folks have to adjust to a very different kind of environment and we help them to do that.

We also give a heads-up to the embassies that are gaining these folks, that they have to be aware of certain issues, and I think we do a good job of that. We include it as part of Ambassadors' train-

ing, that they will be having people that come out of the war zones and they need to be aware of that. So I think we do everything that we can in that regard.

Senator AKAKA. I certainly appreciate all of your responses. I have a final question for you, Ambassador Boswell, and then I will give Mr. Ford an opportunity to make final comments.

Ambassador, providing a secure environment for the diplomatic mission, especially in high-threat areas, requires significant resources. However, the current funding environment has created a great deal of uncertainty. What risks and tradeoffs would DS have to make if the Bureau were not provided consistent funding?

Mr. BOSWELL. That is a crucial question, Mr. Chairman. It certainly is. And you are absolutely right that funding has not been certain or secure. We are in an extremely difficult funding environment now in the United States, a financial environment in the United States, and the discussion in the Congress about our budget have been extremely active, to put it mildly.

But the point I want to make, I think, is that we have been looking at our numbers extremely carefully. The people that sit behind me here are part of that, in fact, the backbone of that team. And we have scrubbed our numbers very carefully and we are confident, with the budget numbers that we have put forward.

If we do not get the kind of funding from the Congress that we need to do what we have to do in Iraq, or what we would like to do in Iraq, we will simply have to do less in Iraq. The point I want to make here is that nobody in the State Department, nobody in the leadership in the State Department, has ever asked me to compromise on security. They have asked me to look at my numbers, but they have never asked me to do with less security than I feel comfortable with.

In other words, if we get less funding, we will do fewer things. We had originally planned, for example, to open four consulates in Iraq. That is down to two. The other ones are still in sort of a suspended animation depending on where the funding comes from. I have never been asked to compromise on the security I provide to any of those.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you so much for your response.

Mr. Ford, would you like to make any final statements?

Mr. FORD. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think your last question is a good one because I think the government, as a whole, is going to be having to address this issue of the fiscal problems in this country and our ability to conduct missions that we are asking all agencies to conduct overseas.

I think I would echo the concerns raised by the Ambassador, that there is a tradeoff. When you are talking about security, DS's role is really protecting other U.S. officials overseas in these countries. And so, to the extent that resources may not be available to conduct their security, it really has a major impact on our ability to conduct foreign policy and foreign affairs.

So I think that is the challenge that the Department of State is, I guess, trying to come to grips with now and is likely going to have to come to grips with in the next couple of years. We would like to see a little more strategic thinking on this issue versus reaction. I do not think it is fair to DS to have to react to a situation

when it could have maybe been pre-planned in advance so that they can come up with contingencies.

I am sure that they have to deal with this every day and I am sure they do a fine job of it, but the Department as a whole, in my mind, needs to be more forthright, I guess, in coming up with what the contingencies are going to be if we do not get the resources. So I think this is going to be a challenge that the Department is going to be faced with in the next several years along with the rest of the Federal Government.

I am hopeful that they will take it seriously because the security, as the Ambassador has mentioned, is probably the most important mission that DS has in these dangerous environments that we are asking our people to work in.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Ford. Again, I want to wish you well in your future.

Ambassador, thank you so much for your work. Your service to our country has been great. I want to be as helpful as I can supporting the Bureau to fulfil its mission. Again, I thank you both for being here today. Your testimony, your responses have been valuable and will certainly help us in our work here in the U.S. Senate. So thank you and aloha to you.

Now I would like to call our second panel. I want to welcome Susan Johnson, President of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). It is the custom, as you know, to swear in our witnesses, so will you please rise and raise your right hand?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give the Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Ms. JOHNSON. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. It will be noted in the record that the witness answered in the affirmative.

Before I start, I want you to know that your full statement will be made part of the record, and I would also like to remind you to please limit your oral remarks to 5 minutes. Ms. Johnson, please proceed with your statement.

**STATEMENT OF SUSAN JOHNSON,¹ PRESIDENT, AMERICAN
FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION**

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) welcomes the opportunity to speak before this Subcommittee on the subject of diplomatic security and its implications for U.S. diplomacy. And let me say at the outset that the diplomatic security agents that I have had the privilege to work with in my postings have been highly professional and competent and AFSA has high regard for the dedication of DS and their record on security issues.

In an increasingly complex and dangerous global environment in which foreign policy and the Foreign Service are required to operate as our Nation's first line of defense, the need to ensure the safety and security of our Foreign Service personnel cannot be over-emphasized. The challenge assumes particular gravity with

¹The prepared statement of Ms. Johnson appears in the appendix on page 48.

the expanding requirement for Foreign Service missions, personnel, and programs in conflict zones.

The June 2011 Government Accountability Office report on Diplomatic Security and critical challenges to its training efforts identifying some systemic weaknesses or gaps in the structure and substance of our Diplomatic Security training, particularly looking forward, recommended that the Department of State enhance Diplomatic Security training center course evaluation and tracking capabilities, and develop an action plan to address proposed increases in high-threat training.

It is not clear to us whether the current training programs are well designed to meet the challenges of the expanded mission, especially in Iraq, or whether Diplomatic Security will have the flexibility it needs to deal with poorly performing security contracts or other problems, and to respond quickly and creatively to unpredictable developments or new situations on the ground.

The January 31 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report on Iraq, the Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort, addresses the challenges of this expanded mission. Given the unprecedented size and complexity of the diplomatic mission in Iraq, currently projected to encompass some 17,000 individuals at 15 different sites, the report raises questions about the availability of resources and whether the mission in Iraq can be implemented without the support of the U.S. military.

In addition, the recent OIG report on Department of State planning for the transition to a civilian-led mission in Iraq notes that while effective planning mechanisms are in place, key decisions remain unresolved and some plans are not finalized. It also points to the problematic security environment, poor contractor performance, and Iraqi government reluctance at all levels to assume responsibility for reconstruction projects.

AFSA does not currently have sufficient information about the scope of the U.S. mission in Iraq, but both as a professional association and the union representing the Foreign Service, it is our responsibility to seek answers to many of the fundamental questions that have been raised.

According to GAO figures, the total number of Diplomatic Security agents deployed worldwide is about 720. Does DS have adequate resources and numbers to manage the approximately 39,000 security contractors worldwide effectively, including those for Iraq? As U.S. forces draw down in Iraq, does the transition plan assume that the Iraqi government and its military forces are ready, able, or even willing to support and protect the U.S. civilian mission?

Given that December 31, 2011 is the hard deadline for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces, is transition planning sufficiently advanced and adequately prepared? Are the Federal law enforcement training standards adhered to by the Diplomatic Security training center sufficient to meet the risks and dangers in Iraq? Is the course content of DS training for DS agents and other Foreign Service personnel being adapted to changing realities of how diplomacy is being conducted today in dangerous environments?

Finally, is the Iraq transition plan right sized? Are its various elements correctly balanced for maximum effectiveness? Simply

put, is this plan realistic and sustainable, and if so, are the preparations in place, including training?

The American Foreign Service has a long and honorable tradition of serving wherever and whenever it is called upon to do so whatever the conditions. However, our political and Department of State leadership are responsible for providing security for those we send into harm's way to carry out our diplomatic missions. We hope that the Subcommittee will examine the Iraq plan closely and ask hard questions about the assumptions upon which it is based.

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. AFSA greatly values your long-standing support of initiatives to enhance diplomatic readiness of our civilian foreign affairs agencies. Thank you, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Johnson, for your statement. Ms. Johnson, as the military withdraws from Iraq, and later Afghanistan, State's presence is growing. DS will provide an unprecedented level of security and protective services that the military is performing now such as downed aircraft recovery and explosive ordnance disposal. You raised concerns about whether the mission is compatible with the resources available.

What resources and personnel are needed, and what more should State be doing to prepare to effectively address this security environment?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you for that question, sir. Based on what AFSA has been told, the State Department is doing its best to plan and prepare in a context of uncertainties at home and in Iraq and Afghanistan and have undertaken an unprecedented planning effort. That said, because of these uncertainties, both at home and on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, AFSA is concerned in two broad areas. You have asked many questions about them and they have been addressed to a certain extent already.

One of them is in the area of contracting and the need for more what I will call contracting training across the board in all of our foreign affairs agencies, not just in the oversight, but from negotiating the initial contracts to administering, managing, and overseeing them, and not just for DS, but also for other parts of the State Department that would be responsible for overseeing and managing contracts for life support systems and other things that we are now contracting out when we undertake missions of this size and scope and complexity.

As has been noted, I think, followed in the press and in many reports, there have been a number of weaknesses identified in contracting overall and the performance. So we believe that a great deal more training has to take place in this area, but that calls for resources and that gets us back to the problem that we have focused in on.

Another area that we think is important would be contingency planning in the event that the host governments cannot or will not deliver as expected. In our planning for Iraq, we are expecting the Iraqi government to provide a number of functions that the U.S. military provided in the past and that DS has said they will not be undertaking. What happens if the Iraqi government cannot or will not deliver those services? What is our Plan B?

Senator AKAKA. Let me followup with this question, Ms. Johnson. Do you believe all of the tasks being transferred from the U.S. military to DS's law enforcement and security core are appropriate? In other words, are there tasks that DS is being asked to undertake that should be performed by non-combat military troops?

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, I was pleased to hear Assistant Secretary Boswell, Ambassador Boswell testify about some of the things that DS is doing to meet the requirements of this vastly expanded mission, and I certainly give them all credit for the efforts that they are making.

However, AFSA would like to hear more open discussion about the pros and cons and the implications of the State Department's taking on security responsibilities for large scale civilian diplomatic and development missions in conflict zones where the capabilities of the host government remain unclear. We think this is an area that really needs to have more attention, so we certainly welcome your efforts in this area, and those of other parts of Congress and other organizations to look at this question.

We have a related question, which is not clear to us yet and that relates to what specific tasks that the U.S. military was performing and that DS will not be performing. Do we now expect the Iraqi government, police, or armed forces to perform these tasks? Do we believe that they are ready, willing, and able to do so, and if so, on what evidence do we base that belief? That is a question that we have that we would like to see and hear answers to.

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Well—

Ms. JOHNSON. So I guess the short answer is, I do not know, but we are a little bit skeptical and we would like to be reassured.

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Well, I hope so as well. Ms. Johnson, the State Department is operating in extremely complex and dangerous environments, situations where in the past State Department would have evacuated. What additional steps should DS take to make sure it is well-positioned to meet current and future training needs for evolving security threats?

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, from AFSA's perspective, there are two elements here. One is the need that the GAO and I think your Committee has focused on for some time along with some other Committees, which is the need for more and better strategic planning by the State Department as a whole and by its various sub-elements, if you want to put it that way. And we certainly support that and would like to see it.

For that reason, we certainly welcome Secretary Clinton's initiative of the QDDR, and we hope that now that we have been through the first iteration of that process that will continue to be refined and adjusted and provide a framework for better and more consistent strategic planning as a whole by the Department of State, and also bringing its various parts more into—synchronize them better.

But to do all this, and a big part of all this, is that we need the resources to have the people required and we need more and better training, professional education and training that focuses on some over-the-horizon-issues, and that means a "training float" sufficient personnel to have people in training without undermining the ca-

capacity of our embassies and missions overseas to meet their responsibilities.

We talk a great deal about training and we have policies that put forward training objectives. But if we do not have the personnel required for a training float, which would allow us to send people to training without negatively impacting on those vacancy rates and other things that you were mentioning, and on real needs in the field, a great deal of that training does not happen.

The other part of that, in addition to a float, is that our training and professional education needs to be tied more closely to assignment and particularly promotion. There have to be real incentives built in and real requirements built in for people to do training. So it comes back to a resource question and we have talked about the very tight fiscal, financial, and resource environment that we are in. So it is a challenge.

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Ms. Johnson, GAO's report on DS identified the challenges of balancing security with State's diplomatic mission. Do you believe progress has been made to achieve this balance?

Ms. JOHNSON. I think the security mission balance issue is, and has been, a very important one for AFSA, and the issue goes far beyond DS itself. They are only one party involved in finding this balance. DS's mission is security. They are dedicated to it and I think they try to lay out what their needs and requirements are.

Diplomatic leadership needs to address the diplomatic goals and what is or is not achievable under different levels of security constraints, and be realistic and open about this. So the QDDR has identified the security mission balance as an issue that needs more attention and discussion. We have not yet seen that process get underway, or if it has, we have not been privy to it.

But it remains a continuing issue of concern for AFSA and we are not convinced that the right balance has been achieved yet.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Johnson, as more DS officers serve in conflict zones, State must be prepared to address the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and other challenges associated with hazardous and high-stress tours of duty. What steps should State take to support DS's officers who return from service at high-threat posts?

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, that is a difficult question and I am glad that you asked it also of Assistant Secretary Boswell and I certainly defer to him on several of the things that DS is doing. I do know that State is well-aware of this problem, not just for DS agents, but for other Foreign Service personnel serving, particularly repeatedly, in high-threat posts.

It is not easy to resolve. All of our people are exposed to danger. So far, with the exception of the mandatory out-brief, it depends on the individual. It is up to the individual to voluntarily seek out help, and that means some do, but many do not for various reasons. In particular, for DS agents, the perceived costs of doing so, in seeking out help, may be high, such as the suspension or temporary suspension of their credentials, their LEAP pay and other things.

So there may be a number of built-in reasons why people are reluctant to seek out the help. But in the Department, as Amba-

sador Boswell mentioned, DS has a peer support group which supports fellow agents and we welcome that and commend it. And the Department has an active employee counseling service and a contract with Life Care to provide a range of support services for all State Department personnel.

But we are venturing into new territory here and I think we are trying to explore, together with other elements of our Federal Government, military, National Guard, what is the answer and how can these problems be addressed.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Johnson, the families of DS officers deployed to dangerous locations also face stress and hardships associated with having a loved one in harm's way. What services should State provide to support the families of DS officers deployed to high-threat posts?

Ms. JOHNSON. From AFSA's perspective, all of our people and members, DS and non-DS, are exposed to dangers, and when it comes to Department support for families who are very much affected by this, we believe that all families should have access to the same support. As I mentioned earlier, the Department is well aware of this and is trying to grapple with it.

I think the fundamental issue right now is to find a way of encouraging more people to voluntarily reach out. There may be some ways that the Department could get the resources to proactively reach out to families, as well as employees, at least to offer them counseling or other services that might help them cope with the hardships and the dangers and the stresses involved with these kinds of situations.

So we would favor that, if the Department could do it, but we do not have the answer to that. We would like to see, and I believe we are working with the Department to try to come up with, effective ways of providing support for people who are under stress from service in high-threat posts.

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Well, Ms. Johnson, would you like to provide any final thoughts on what we have discussed?

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, there was one element that I mentioned and I will just offer another thought on it. It has to do with more flexibility for DS to deal with unforeseen circumstances that might arise.

I think this is just coming from our sense, as we have watched this now over the years for our military as well as our diplomatic personnel, that when called upon to operate in uncertain, dangerous, high-risk environments, agility, nimbleness, flexibility become critical, and that means having contingency funding or resources; Plan B and Plan C.

We are not clear on what short-term options DS has if a contractor who is providing critical security is not performing. Then I suppose the Iraqi government is the Plan B. But what if that is not forthcoming? The military had a depth of resource for emergency that it could call upon, but in this new situation that might not be there. So what is the plan?

Senator AKAKA. Yes. Well, these are some of the challenges that we have to work on. Through this hearing we are trying to determine weaknesses that we can strengthen that will help our mission. As discussed earlier there have been so many changes and so

many things that remain uncertain, so it is important that we conduct strategic planning, and have contingency plans to deal with potential changes.

Ms. JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

Senator AKAKA. I appreciate you being here today Ms. Johnson. The reason why we wanted to hear from you is to hear from those who have had experience in this area and who may see it from a different view and give us a different slant of possible solutions that may help us in providing the security our country needs.

So I thank you very much for being here and helping us with your valuable information and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, sir, and we appreciate the opportunity to, as you say, bring a different perspective because our perspective is from where we sit, each of us, and we are seeing a different angle on this than our colleagues in the State Department. We think both are valuable to you. So we certainly appreciate the work that you and your Subcommittee are doing and your staff.

Senator AKAKA. Well, thank you very much.

I would like to thank you and our other witnesses here. It is clear to me that the Diplomatic Security Bureau has made great progress in meeting the demands of its expanding responsibilities. However, more work remains. Many of the concerns and recommendations discussed today are dependent on making sure that the resources provided to DS match the scope of the vital mission.

The success of U.S. foreign policy and the lives of the brave men and women who promote it in some of the world's most dangerous places depends on a robust Diplomatic Security committed to working with State and stakeholders like AFSA to enhance diplomatic security readiness. We hope we can provide some solutions toward these uncertainties.

The hearing record will be open for 2 weeks for additional statements or questions that Members may have. So this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:19 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATEMENT OF

ERIC J. BOSWELL

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BEFORE THE

SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (HSGAC)

HEARING ON
THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. DIPLOMACY

June 29, 2011

(27)

Good Afternoon, Chairman Akaka and members of the committee –

I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to thank you and the Committee members for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's programs. This support enables Diplomatic Security to safeguard American diplomats and facilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, while maintaining our robust investigative programs, which serve to protect U.S. borders and diplomats abroad. As noted in the most recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, Diplomatic Security's training program is at the core of our readiness to fulfill these missions. With your permission, I will make a brief statement.

As I have stated before this Committee in the past, Diplomatic Security continues to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of America's foreign policy. I must reiterate that the scope and scale of DS's responsibilities and authorities have grown immensely in response to emerging threats and security incidents. The Bureau needs significant resources to meet the requirements of securing our diplomatic facilities in the extremely high-threat environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, and Mexico, as well as other dangerous locations worldwide. The Department now operates diplomatic missions in locations where, in the past, when faced with similar threats, we likely would have closed the post and evacuated all personnel. We do this because the continuous conduct of diplomacy in the post-9/11 environment is essential to our nation's security.

Diplomatic Security Training

To meet our challenges, now and in the future, Diplomatic Security personnel and resources have grown and evolved. This expansion has changed the requirements

for training our people. DS training has progressed tremendously in the past several years. The GAO review of DS training accurately reflects the exceptional success of our Training Directorate despite the challenges we face.

DS training has obtained accreditation with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation Board and developed an Instructional Systems Management team to track all received training. The number of personnel requiring training each year has swelled. The DS Training Center (DSTC) trains the Diplomatic Security Service's approximately 2,000 special agents, 340 security engineers and technicians, 101 couriers, and a growing number of new security protective specialists, as well as many other personnel of the Department of State and other U.S. government agencies serving under Chief of Mission authority. DSTC also runs several specialized programs to enhance Diplomatic Security's capabilities.

To ensure that the personnel we deploy are highly qualified, our training programs are carefully evaluated, including soliciting feedback, which enables us to offer the highest quality instruction to new and existing DS personnel. This evaluation process helps to verify that the training offered is relevant to the new realities of our Bureau's mission and ensures that DS personnel are prepared to assume increasing security responsibilities in high-threat and other challenging environments.

For example, to carry out the Department's mission in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat – or FACT – course was designed for U.S. government personnel serving under Chief of Mission authority in those countries. In the past 12 months, more than 2,100 USG-personnel have completed the FACT training course. To assist the DS special agents serving in hostile environments, DS developed the High-Threat Tactical Training Course. DS now has

well over 700 special agents who are “high-threat qualified,” and our long-term goal is to provide high-threat training to all DS agents.

In 2011, the transition of mission responsibility in Iraq – from military-led to civilian-led, with the consequential withdrawal of U.S. military forces – has caused the Department to rethink its pre-deployment training. As a result, the Department requested that DS and the Foreign Service Institute design and implement an additional specialized security immersion-training course for personnel assigned to Iraq under Chief of Mission authority. This new course furthers the upward trajectory of the training responsibility carried by the DSTC. More requests for this course are anticipated and will likely include personnel from other posts, such as Afghanistan. This new security immersion course is expected to kick off this summer, and we expect it to add a training load of 700 students in its first year.

GAO Training Report Recommendations

The GAO report made three specific recommendations for improvement to DS, two of which cite concerns that DS management already had been working to resolve.

The first of these recommendations suggests that the DS Training Center should develop or improve the ability to obtain post-training evaluations for all DSTC-required training. The second recommendation proposes improved processes to track DS training requirements and the completion of DSTC training.

DS concurs with these two recommendations, and the DSTC has been working to acquire an automated electronic survey tool that would be able to reach all students – State as well as non-State employees. To achieve this end:

- We are funding an online survey software tool in conjunction with discussions with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). We are working with FSI, which manages the Department's enterprise-level Learning Management System for tracking, analyzing, and reporting purposes on distance learning courses and established curriculum. Data from DS's online survey tool could then be integrated seamlessly into FSI's existing database.
- We are also working with FSI to establish a controlled access site within the FSI Learning Management System for our various audiences, including State and non-State students, to help students provide feedback easily once training is complete.

DS constantly reviews student input and considers various recommendations to improve the existing curriculum. This improvement in feedback collection would ensure that DSTC courses meet the needs of all attendees.

The third recommendation is related to the Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, or QDDR. The QDDR is coordinated by the Policy Planning Staff and the Office of Management, Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation as part of the task to revise the risk management framework. The QDDR established the goal of operating more effectively in the dangerous environments where very real threats to our people have required us to limit the movement or activities of our personnel. DS participates in the review and implementation of the QDDR, as one of DS's strengths is its ability to balance diplomacy and security. An initial QDDR recommendation is to extend FACT training to all staff going to high-risk posts. DS is working with the Department in setting parameters for what additional posts should be added to this mandate.

Need for Consolidated Training Center

The 2011 GAO study of DS Training emphasized the need for a consolidated DS training facility, the requirement for which had been validated by a May 2008 report from the Department of State's Office of Inspector General. The report outlined an increased need for security training and provided the initial concepts for a consolidated security training complex.

The Department outlined a strategy for co-locating security training operations into one centralized location. A new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, or FASTC, would be used to train law enforcement, security, and foreign affairs employees and others effectively in an efficient modern training facility. Personnel heading overseas would benefit from receiving critical security and life safety training in a centralized training venue.

As Diplomatic Security continues to explore ways to provide innovative security blueprints to help implement our national foreign policy priorities, it is important that we continue to develop a cadre of DS personnel who can think creatively to propose solutions and who can work closely and cooperatively with their embassy colleagues to succeed without sacrificing safety and security. Existing DS training facilities and instructor resources are now at maximum student capacity and capabilities, however. A new FASTC would expand and improve the delivery of FACT training for U.S. government employees working in high-threat locations.

Effectively Managing the Security Contractor Workforce

The Department uses private security contractors – PSCs – to assist in meeting security staffing requirements in critical-threat and non-permissive environments. As a result of operational changes already implemented and reviewed during the conduct of the Department’s QDDR, the Department is able to ensure proper management, oversight, and operational control of PSCs deployed overseas by the Department. Further, DOS institutionalized many of these changes in the Worldwide Protective Services contract awarded in September 2010. This WPS contract incorporates essential lessons learned to ensure that PSCs contracted by the Department perform their activities in a professional, responsible, culturally sensitive, and cost-effective manner.

DS’s plan for management, oversight, and operational control of PSC personnel includes the following:

- PSC operational control, administrative management, and contractual oversight will be performed at each location by DS personnel specifically assigned to WPS contract oversight responsibilities at each post. DS currently employs 81 special agents in Iraq to manage the Embassy’s security programs in Baghdad, Erbil, and Tallil, which will close June 30, 2011. As the Department’s presence in Iraq expands, DS is establishing and staffing 25 new special agent positions and up to 68 security protective specialist positions to manage each post’s security program and provide direct operational control and contractual oversight of the security program and protective security details.
- The plan will ensure appropriate levels of professionalism and responsive operational responsibility through direct operational control and oversight of security contractor personnel.

- The plan will improve the image of the security footprint through enhanced cultural sensitivity and achieve greater efficiencies through new contract terms, such as one set of terms and conditions, to enhance the ability to provide uniform, appropriate, and consistent oversight.

Providing Support to Our Personnel and Their Families

The Department fully realizes that when one of its employees serves in a high-threat environment, the employee's whole family serves with him or her in one form or another. The State Department created the Deployment Stress Management Program – DSMP – in 2006. The DSMP is a community-based program that supports the psychological health of Foreign Service personnel and other employees of DOS and USAID, and their families, who are or will be assigned to high-stress, high-threat, unaccompanied tours. The DSMP provides information, referrals, initial assessment, and brief treatment for problems related to the stress of deployment. The program spans the entire timeframe of deployment operations, addressing prevention, early detection, and treatment of psychological health issues before, during, and after deployment. The program provides multiple approaches to treating and preventing symptoms, focusing on teaching and counseling to build psychological resiliency to help deal with stress.

DS personnel are taught health and safety information for first responders. DS has its own peer support group, which is a non-medical resource described as “for agents, by agents.” In response to feedback from returning officers, the State Department mandates that employees spending more than 90 days in Iraq or Afghanistan attend the High Stress Assignment Outbrief Program. These outbriefs are highly recommended for officers returning from other high-stress, high-threat posts as well.

Both the DSMP and the DS Support Group are confidential avenues of assistance, and the overall team works diligently to overcome any stigma associated with seeking mental health care. The programs are flexible and tailored to the needs of the employee and his/her family. Future supervisors and colleagues of those personnel leaving high-stress assignments are advised to watch for any signs of deployment-related psychological health issues and any effect they may have on the person's life post-deployment. DS also has active-duty and retired agents who volunteer to stand by, 24 hours/7 days a week, to offer any support that a DS employee and his/her family might need.

Workforce and Management Challenges

I would like to briefly update you on the areas of workforce and management challenges that were a previous concern to the Committee. In May 2010, we created the Strategic Planning and Performance Team with the mission of evaluating key areas of interest, as directed by DS senior leadership, and providing recommendations for improvement. One outcome was the movement toward an Integrated Threat Response – ITR – that will include three levels of response to emergencies (immediate, intermediate, and enduring), as well as to high-threat, high-vulnerability situations with extended timeframes. The team evaluates performance and makes formal recommendations to help manage threats and support foreign policy initiatives. The team is making certain the ITR is fully integrated and operational across the Bureau.

Our recruitment efforts have also paid off. We will have no issue meeting our special agent hiring numbers this fiscal year and have established a healthy register for FY 2012 intake. We have closed the gap on our security engineering officer hiring and anticipate meeting our intake numbers for the fiscal year. It has taken us

several years to close this deficit, but through our outreach efforts we have succeeded. We are looking at ways to close the deficit for our security technical specialist intake, and we intend to increase our recruitment efforts at technical schools and military career fairs.

Furthermore, in 2009 the GAO reported that 53 percent of the regional security officers did not meet language-proficiency requirements. I am pleased to report that as of June 2011, we have improved our language proficiency, and of the positions requiring language, 64 percent of the RSOs fulfill the language requirement. We will continue to work with the Foreign Service Institute to further improve this area.

Conclusion

Our mission is unique, and DS remains one of the most dynamic agencies in the U.S. federal law enforcement and security community. In conclusion, I want to assure this Committee that DS is fully prepared to provide the secure platform and environment the Department of State needs to meet the challenging diplomatic responsibilities we face in this ever-changing world. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. With your continued support, we will ensure that the Diplomatic Security Service remains a valuable and effective resource for protecting our people, information, and infrastructure around the world.

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
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DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

**Expanded Missions and
Inadequate Facilities Pose
Critical Challenges to
Training Efforts**

Statement of Jess T. Ford, Director
International Affairs and Trade



GAO-11-780T

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here to discuss the training efforts of the U.S. Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security). My testimony is based on our report, which is being released today.¹ Diplomatic Security is responsible for the protection of people, information, and property at over 400 embassies, consulates, and domestic locations and, as we reported in previous testimony, experienced a large growth in its budget and personnel over the last decade.² Diplomatic Security trains its workforce and others to address a variety of threats, including crime, espionage, visa and passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism. To meet its training needs, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on its Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC), which is an office of Diplomatic Security's Training Directorate and is the primary provider of Diplomatic Security training. Diplomatic Security's training budget grew steadily from fiscal years 2006 to 2010—increasing from approximately \$24 million in fiscal year 2006 to nearly \$70 million in fiscal year 2010. In fiscal year 2010, DSTC conducted 342 sessions of its 61 courses and trained 4,739 students.

Our prior work identified the challenges that Diplomatic Security experienced as a result of growth stemming from the reaction to a number of security incidents.³ GAO found that State is maintaining a presence in an increasing number of dangerous posts, is facing staffing shortages and other operational challenges that tax Diplomatic Security's ability to implement all of its missions and has not provided Diplomatic Security with adequate strategic guidance.

Today I will discuss (1) how Diplomatic Security ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training and the extent to which Diplomatic Security ensures that training requirements are being met, and (2) challenges that Diplomatic Security faces in carrying out its training mission.

¹GAO, *Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts*, GAO-11-460 (Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2011).

²GAO, *Department of State: Challenges Facing the Bureau of Diplomatic Security*, GAO-10-290T (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 9, 2009).

³GAO, *Department of State: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, GAO-10-156 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2009).

To address these objectives in our report, we interviewed numerous State and Diplomatic Security officials at headquarters, several training facilities, and five overseas posts, as well as officials at other relevant agencies. We reviewed and analyzed government standards and other legislative and regulatory guidance, data and documentation related to Diplomatic Security-provided training efforts, information and data on recent DSTC and other Diplomatic Security-provided course offerings, and overall funding for training from 2006 to 2011. We also observed classroom- and exercise-based training at several Diplomatic Security training facilities and viewed examples of other types of DSTC-provided learning. Because we recently reviewed training provided by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), this report did not include an assessment of the training that Diplomatic Security personnel received through FSI.⁴ We conducted this performance audit from June 2010 to May 2011, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. More information on our scope and methodology and detailed findings are available in the full report.⁵

In brief, DSTC has had to meet the challenge of training more personnel to perform additional duties while still getting Diplomatic Security's agents, engineers, technicians, and other staff—as well as a growing number of personnel outside of its workforce—into the field, where they are needed. DSTC has largely met this challenge by maintaining high standards for its training. Specifically, DSTC incorporated Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) standards into its operating procedures and became the first federal law enforcement agency to receive accreditation. Certain issues, however, constrain the effectiveness of DSTC's systems. DSTC lacks the systems needed to evaluate the effectiveness of some required training despite its own standards to do so, and its systems do not accurately and adequately track the use of some of its training. More importantly, we identified three key challenges that DSTC faces: an increasing number of training missions in Iraq, a potential

⁴GAO, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel*, GAO-11-241 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 25, 2011).

⁵GAO-11-460.

increase in the number of students it has to train, and inadequate training facilities.

Diplomatic Security Generally Adheres to Standards and Tracks Training, but Its Systems Have Weaknesses

To ensure the quality and appropriateness of its training, Diplomatic Security primarily adheres to FLETA standards. Diplomatic Security incorporated FLETA standards into its standard operating procedures, using a course design framework tailored for DSTC. In our report, we used the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course to demonstrate how DSTC modified the design of one of its courses over time. The FACT course provides mandatory training on conducting surveillance detection, aspects of personnel recovery, emergency medical care, improvised explosive device awareness, firearms familiarization, and defensive/counterterrorist driving maneuvers to all U.S. government employees serving under chief of mission authority in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, and parts of Mexico. Since 2003, FACT has been redesigned and modified several times in response to changing high-threat environments. For instance, a 2005 State Office of Inspector General report noted that U.S. government personnel were not expected to drive themselves in Iraq but regularly did so. As a result, DSTC added driving skills to the FACT course. In 2009, because of indirect fire attacks, the Ambassador to Iraq noted that personnel needed to know what the sirens announcing a rocket attack sounded like and what the protective bunkers looked like. In response, DSTC built two bunkers on one of its leased facilities and now uses them in conducting duck-and-cover exercises to recorded sirens. DSTC officials noted that FACT is very well received by the students, and one State official stated that the reason she survived a bombing attack was because of her FACT training.

Diplomatic Security does have some weaknesses when it comes to evaluating all of its training population and tracking the training to ensure that training requirements are met. Distributed or online training is a growing part of DSTC efforts to save costs and reach people in the field. However, DSTC's systems do not have the capability to obtain feedback on its online training. DSTC officials also stated that DSTC has difficulty obtaining feedback from non-State personnel, a growing portion of its student body. DSTC instead relies on voluntary comments from the agencies or individual students from those agencies. Without feedback, DSTC is less able to ensure the effectiveness of these efforts.

DSTC's systems also do not have the capability to track whether personnel have completed all required training. For example, DSTC officials are using an unofficial method to track completion of FACT training; called

the FACT tracker, it is used on DSTC's internal web site to log in all personnel who take the class, including non-State students. Additionally, agents are required to pass a firearms requalification every 4 months when they are posted domestically and once a year if posted overseas. However, DSTC systems do not effectively track this requirement, and it is the agents' and supervisors' responsibility to keep track of when their next requalification is due. Moreover, DSTC systems are not designed to track training delivered through distributed or online training or keep records of participation or performance. For example, DSTC provides "Knowledge from the Field" DVDs—information and professional development products that include lessons learned from attacks and other incidents at consulates and embassies. However, DSTC cannot say for certain which of its personnel have accessed the training.

DSTC officials noted that they are pursuing access to a more robust learning management system to address some of the difficulties with their existing systems. According to State officials, DSTC and FSI are currently discussing whether DSTC will be able to use or modify FSI's learning management system for DSTC's purposes.

Diplomatic Security Faces Significant Challenges to Carrying Out Its Expanded Training Mission

Diplomatic Security faces significant ongoing challenges to carrying out its training mission, including (1) an increasing number of training missions in Iraq, (2) a potential increase in the number of students it has to train, and (3) inadequate training facilities.

Expanding Missions in Iraq Challenge DSTC's Ability to Meet Training Needs

DSTC must train Diplomatic Security personnel to perform new missions in Iraq as they take on many of the protective and security functions previously provided by the U.S. military and which Diplomatic Security has had little or no experience in providing, including downed aircraft recovery, explosives ordnance disposal, and rocket and mortar countermeasures, among others. DSTC officials pointed to a number of coordination mechanisms and other efforts to meet new training needs. For example, as of March 2011, DSTC, in coordination with the Diplomatic Security Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected (MRAP) armored vehicles working group, had completed the design and development of an MRAP training course. However, Diplomatic Security officials noted that the

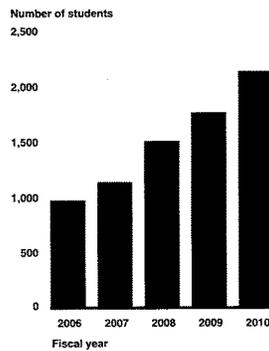
additional training will likely increase the time needed to get Diplomatic Security personnel into the field.

**Proposed Increase in
Number of Students
Requiring Training May
Further Strain DSTC
Resources**

DSTC faces a proposal that will dramatically increase the number of State and non-State personnel required to take high-threat training (see fig. 1), including FACT training, but State does not have an action plan and time frames to manage the proposed increases. These expanded training missions constrain DSTC's ability to meet training needs. State's 2010 *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR) stated that all personnel at high-threat posts, as well as those at critical-threat posts, will now receive FACT training.⁹ According to Diplomatic Security officials, this would increase the number of posts for which FACT is required from 23 to 178, increasing the number of students taking FACT each year from about 2,000 to over 10,000. DSTC officials noted that they lack the capacity to handle so many students and that current FACT classes are already filled to capacity. DSTC would need to locate or build additional driving tracks, firearms ranges, and explosives ranges, as well as obtain instructors and other staff to support such a dramatic increase in students. According to Diplomatic Security officials, State has not completed an action plan or established time frames to carry out the QDDR recommendation. Given these difficulties, Diplomatic Security officials noted that they did not see how the new requirement could be implemented.

⁹Department of State, *Leading through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (2010).

Figure 1: Increase in DSTC-Provided High-Threat Training from 2006 to 2010



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.

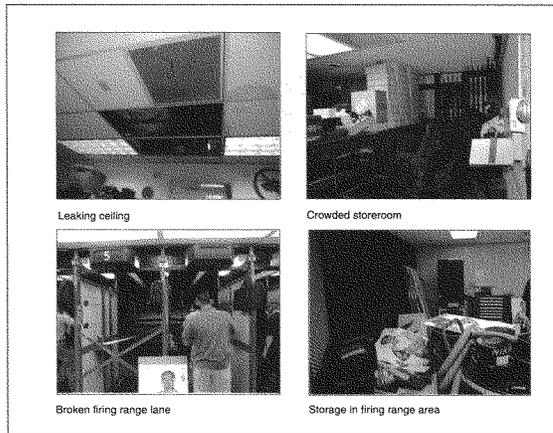
Existing Facilities Hamper Training Efforts and Strain Resources

In addition, DSTC's training facilities do not meet its training needs, a situation that hampers efficient and effective operations. Diplomatic Security leases, rents, or borrows all of the 16 facilities it uses, and the number of facilities in use at any given time and how they are used vary based on training requirements and facility availability. For example, Diplomatic Security uses the firearms ranges at Marine Corps Base Quantico to train with heavier weapons. However, according to Diplomatic Security officials, the Marines occasionally force Diplomatic Security to change its training schedule, sometimes with minimal notice, which increases costs and makes it difficult for DSTC staff to meet training objectives within the time available.

Several leased facilities, such as State Annex-7, are overcrowded and need various repairs, in part because of disputes between Diplomatic Security and its lessor over which party is responsible for structural repairs (see fig. 2). DSTC's main firearms ranges are in these buildings, but according to DSTC officials, the ranges are small and have some unusable firing lanes. In addition, because of the limitations of its facilities, Diplomatic Security has had to improvise with makeshift solutions to provide some types of training—for example, placing tape on the floors of its garage at

State Annex-11 to simulate walls for conducting room-entry training (see fig. 3).

Figure 2: Disrepair and Crowding at State Annex-7



Source: GAO.

Figure 3: Simulated Tape Walls Used in Training



Source: GAO.

Recognizing that its existing facilities were inadequate, DSTC developed an Interim Training Facility in 2007. Nevertheless, Diplomatic Security officials noted that the facility is a stopgap solution and cannot meet a number of Diplomatic Security's training needs such as the firing of heavier weapons, the use of more powerful explosives to train agents in incident management, and the integrated tactical use of driving and firearms training in a mock urban environment. The Interim Training Facility also lacks space for Diplomatic Security to train its personnel for many of the additional missions that they are expected to take over from the U.S. military in Iraq. In order address its inadequate facilities, State has been pursuing the development of a consolidated training facility. State was allocated \$136 million in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to begin development of the facility and is currently in the process of identifying a suitable location.

Recommendations for Executive Action

Our report being released today includes three recommendations for the Secretary of State, the first two of which are to develop or improve the processes to obtain participant evaluations for all of DSTC required training, including distributed training efforts, and to track individual DSTC training requirements and completion of DSTC training. We also recommend that the Secretary develop an action plan and associated time frames needed to carry out the QDDR recommendation to increase the number of posts at which FACT is required. State agreed with our findings and recommendations. In addition, we found that State had not followed through on its commitment to carry out a strategic review of Diplomatic Security as recommended in our 2009 report.⁷ Given the restrained fiscal environment and growing mission in Iraq, it is even more critical today that State carry out such a review.

Chairman Akaka and Ranking Member Johnson, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have at this time.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Jess. T. Ford at (202) 512-4268 or fordj@gao.gov. Contact points for our offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this testimony. GAO staff who made significant contributions to this testimony are Anthony Moran, Assistant Director; Thomas Costa; Anh Nguyen; David Dayton; Cheron Green; and Mark Speight.

⁷GAO-10-156.

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Testimony of Susan Rockwell Johnson
President, American Foreign Service Association

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce,
and the District of Columbia
Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI)

Hearing on:
*"The Diplomatic Shield: Diplomatic Security and its Implications for U.S.
Diplomacy"*
June 29, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Senator Johnson, and distinguished subcommittee members, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) welcomes the opportunity to speak before this subcommittee on the subject of diplomatic security and its vital role as an essential enabler of effective diplomacy in today's difficult and dangerous environments. We are grateful to you for convening a hearing on this important issue and for your continuing oversight of this important function.

In an increasingly complex and dangerous global environment, in which foreign policy and the Foreign Service are required to operate as our nation's first line of defense, the need to ensure the safety and security of our Foreign Service personnel cannot be overemphasized. The challenge assumes particular gravity with the expanding requirement for Foreign Service missions, personnel and programs in conflict zones. The State Department's diplomatic security training structures and content must evolve to keep pace with these developments.

The June 2011 Government Accountability Office report titled *"Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges*

to *Training Efforts*” identifies some fundamental weaknesses in the structure and substance of our diplomatic security training, affecting both training of DS officers and non-DS personnel, which State has acknowledged. The GAO rightly concludes that State’s programs are currently not as well designed to meet the challenge - especially in light of expanding missions, such as the impending ramp-up of our civilian presence in Iraq - as they need to be.

AFSA notes that the State Department essentially agrees with the GAO’s assessment. But we have additional questions about the wider implications of the report’s conclusions, both for the ability of our diplomats to do their jobs effectively and securely, and for efforts to find the right balance between those two sometimes conflicting imperatives. In particular, we have serious questions about the current Iraq transition plan.

AFSA also concurs with many of the conclusions and recommendation of the Jan. 31 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report on *Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort*.” Given the unprecedented size and complexity of the diplomatic mission in Iraq -- currently projected to encompass some 17,000 individuals at 15 different sites, including three air hubs, three police training centers, two consulates, two embassy branch offices, and five Office of Security Cooperation sites -- a reading of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report raises some fundamental questions:

-- What kind of security relationship will the Iraqi government want with the United States?

-- How can the State Department effectively operate in difficult security environments without the support of the American military?

-- Is the scope of the mission in Iraq compatible with the resources available, including State Department capacity, the financial commitment from Congress, a degree of U.S. military support, and the backing of the Iraqi government?

-- If these elements are not fully in place, will the administration choose to scale back the diplomatic mission? Or will it accept a degree of physical risk familiar to military personnel but normally unacceptable for diplomats?

Addressing these and other similar questions, the report has made a number of recommendations which deserve careful consideration, especially those addressing efforts to ensure that resources, capacities and policy objectives are in balance, and

to clarify what the U.S. military presence in Iraq, if any, will look like beyond 2012.

AFSA does not currently have sufficient information about the situation in Iraq or about the scope of the U.S. mission and the personnel required to carry it out. But we believe it is our responsibility, both as a professional association and the union representing the entire Foreign Service, to seek answers to the following questions, in addition to those raised by the GAO and Senate Foreign Relations Committee reports.

- 1) Considering that, according to GAO figures, the total number of Diplomatic Security agents deployed worldwide is only about 720, does DS have the adequate resources and numbers to manage the approximately 39,000 security contractors worldwide effectively, including those proposed for Iraq?
- 2) As U.S. forces draw down in Iraq, does the Transition Plan assume that the Iraqi government and its military forces are ready, able or even willing to support and protect the U.S. civilian mission in Iraq? If so, what evidence do we have to support this assumption?
- 3) Given that Dec. 31, 2011 – just six months away – is a hard deadline for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces, is transition planning sufficiently advanced to allow all elements of the plan to be adequately prepared, supported and effectively implemented in time, without compromising the security of civilian personnel or impeding their ability to adequately fulfill their mission?
- 4) Is the content of the Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism (FACT) course, given to all non-DS personnel embarking for dangerous posts, either adequate or relevant to the conditions that are expected to prevail in Iraq after the drawdown?
- 5) Finally, is the Iraq Transition plan right-sized, are its various elements correctly balanced for maximum effectiveness, and are means adequately matched to ends to perform the mission for which it is intended? Or is this unprecedented undertaking too large and overly complex to be performed effectively and securely?

CONCLUSION

AFSA agrees with the GAO report's conclusion that State's diplomatic security training programs suffer from a systemic weakness. These stem from structural deficiencies which the report identifies and in which State concurs, and are exacerbated by the need to adapt course content -- both for DS agents and other Foreign Service personnel -- to the changing realities of how diplomacy is actually conducted today in war zones and other dangerous environments. This consideration is particularly relevant for the safety of our diplomatic personnel and for the success of their difficult mission in Iraq. We hope that the subcommittee will examine that plan closely and ask hard questions about the assumptions upon which it is based.

There is inherent conflict between assuring real security, particularly in war zones, and the ability of diplomats and civilians to do their jobs effectively, which includes the ability to move unencumbered by heavy security and, when needed, on short notice. To find the right balance between the two imperatives is difficult. However, we cannot escape the responsibility to provide security for those we send into harm's way to carry out the mission. Doing so will depend on provision of the necessary resources, financial and human; training of DS personnel of appropriate content and duration; and assurances that the host government clearly understands and agrees with the scope and nature of the mission, including the military support it must provide.

In addition, DS must have the flexibility to deal with non-performing security contracts or other problems, and to respond quickly and creatively to unpredictable developments or new situations on the ground.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. The United States Foreign Service has a long and honorable tradition of serving wherever and whenever it is called upon to do so, whatever the conditions. Its leadership bears the responsibility of ensuring that the diplomatic mission is well conceived and viable.

AFSA values your longstanding support of initiatives to enhance the diplomatic readiness of our civilian Foreign Service agencies. We particularly appreciate the leadership you have shown in convening this hearing, and we look forward to continuing to serve as a resource for you and your colleagues.

BACKGROUND
THE DIPLOMAT'S SHIELD: DIPLOMATIC SECURITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
FOR DIPLOMACY
JUNE 29, 2011

Background

DS is responsible for the protection of people, property, and information at more than 400 State Department missions overseas and domestic facilities.¹ Since the attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, DS's mission, resources, and personnel have grown significantly. Between 1998 and 2011, DS's budget increased from about \$170 million² to approximately \$2.8 billion, which includes \$1.7 billion for operations in Iraq.³

The DS training budget has increased significantly as well, growing from \$24 million in 2006 to nearly \$70 million in 2010.⁴ The Diplomatic Security Training Directorate is responsible for training over 3,000 DS personnel, as well as other State and non-State personnel. In fiscal year 2010, the Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC), housed within DS's Training Directorate, trained more than 4,700 students, conducting 342 sessions of 61 courses.⁵ These numbers may grow dramatically in the near term. DS officials estimate that, annually, over 10,000 civilian personnel will be required to take DSTC's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course to satisfy new State training requirements.⁶

The Bureau's responsibilities are expected to continue to expand in response to the ongoing U.S. troop withdrawal in Iraq and planned troop reductions in Afghanistan. As they do, DS will face challenges in providing necessary training, maintaining sufficient language proficiency, effectively overseeing a large and growing contractor workforce, and balancing security needs against diplomatic objectives.

GAO Report on Diplomatic Security Training

The GAO reviewed how DS ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training, the extent to which DS ensures that its training requirements are being met, and any challenges that DS faces in carrying out its training mission. The GAO's report, which will be released in conjunction

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts*, Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-11-460, June 2011, p. 1.

² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, Report to the Chairman and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-10-156, December 2009, p. 16.

³ Meeting with representatives from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in Washington, D.C., June 10, 2011.

⁴ GAO-11-460, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3 and 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

with this hearing, found that, generally, DS has met the challenges of training more personnel to perform additional duties; however, an expanding mission poses several significant challenges.⁷

First, DSTC does not have the systems in place to obtain feedback from all training participants. Evaluating training is important to understanding the benefits of training development efforts.⁸

Second, although DS generally ensures that its employees follow established training paths, DSTC's systems do not have the capability to track participation in all of its training courses. For example, DSTC's systems do not have the capability to track those who receive training through distributed learning and its courses for non-State personnel. Additionally, while DSTC can verify whether an individual has taken high-threat training, it lacks mechanisms for more comprehensively tracking who has, or has not, taken this training, making it more difficult and less efficient to ensure that all State and non-State personnel are prepared for their assignments.⁹

Third, DSTC lacks a consolidated training facility and uses 16 different leased, rented, or borrowed facilities, some of which do not meet DS training needs. According to DS officials, this situation increases costs and slows down training.¹⁰ The Bureau is in the process of selecting a location to build a consolidated training center.

Finally, as discussed in more detail below, DS faces significant training and other challenges in responding to the drawdown of troops in Iraq.

The GAO recommended that the Secretary of State develop or improve the process to obtain participant evaluations for all DSTC required training; develop or improve the process to track individual DSTC training requirements and completion of DSTC courses; and develop an action plan to carry out the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) recommendation that all personnel assigned to high-threat posts fulfill FACT training. The State Department agreed with all three of GAO's recommendations. The Department plans to seek an automated electronic survey tool that can reach State and non-State students in order to obtain training feedback. DS is exploring with State's Foreign Service Institute the capabilities of their learning management system. According to State, the Policy Planning Staff and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation are coordinating a response to the QDDR recommendation as part of the task to revise their risk management framework.¹¹

2009 GAO Report on Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth and Challenges

The Subcommittee held a hearing in 2009 that reviewed DS,¹² including findings and recommendations from a GAO report on how DS's role changed over the past decade and the challenges it faced at that time.¹³ GAO found that numerous security incidents at embassies and

⁷ *Ibid.* highlights.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp 7-17.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 17-20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 27-35.

¹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 37 and 67-68.

¹² S. Hrg. 111-461.

¹³ GAO-10-156.

consulates and attacks on U.S. officials had expanded DS's mission, personnel needs, and financial requirements. Operations in dangerous environments where State would previously have evacuated personnel, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, further taxed DS resources.¹⁴

DS's responses to these new security threats included increasing security measures at diplomatic facilities, establishing surveillance detection teams at almost all diplomatic posts, and providing each Chief of Mission and Principal Officer with a fully armored vehicle. DS had also upgraded its domestic technical and procedural security programs and counterintelligence program.¹⁵

GAO identified staffing and training challenges discussed in more detail below. Additionally, GAO concluded that the State Department had failed to use strategic planning to address DS resource needs and management challenges.¹⁶

The GAO recommended that the Secretary of State review DS, either as part of the QDDR or separately. Specifically, the review should examine operating with adequate staff, securing facilities that do not meet security standards, staffing foreign missions with personnel who possess the appropriate language skills, operating programs with experienced staff, and balancing security needs with the Department's diplomatic mission. The State Department agreed with GAO's recommendation and stated that the Department's Under Secretary for Management and Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security are committed to ensuring that DS will benefit from the QDDR.¹⁷ This hearing will address the status of the findings and recommendations from the 2009 report.

Key Challenges

Staffing Challenges

In 2009, GAO found staffing shortages and experience gaps at DS limited the effectiveness of domestic offices and prevented DS personnel from receiving updated security training. The report noted that approximately one-third of DS's domestic offices operated with a 25 percent or higher vacancy rate, and 34 percent of DS positions were filled with officers below the position's grade.¹⁸ DS particularly struggled to fully staff hardship posts. State Department officials attributed staffing shortages primarily to increased demand for protection details, the annual staffing cycle, and the need to draw staff from other missions to satisfy needs in Iraq.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 11-12, 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 13-14.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 35-37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 30 and 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 29-35; see also U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Additional Steps Needed to Address Continuing Staffing and Experience Gaps at Hardship Posts*, Report to the Chairman and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-09-874, September 2009, pp. 28-29, which examined State Department staffing gaps at hardship posts and concluded that the Department had an insufficient number of Foreign Service Officers, an ongoing mid-level experience gap, and an assignment system that did not specifically address the continuing experience gaps at hardship posts.

DS has taken steps to address the staffing shortages, which include doubling its staff size since 1998; creating the security protection specialist position to provide oversight of protection details in Iraq; filling all positions in Iraq and Afghanistan before filling other positions; restricting employees' annual leave on a limited basis; and relying more heavily on contractors to fill critical needs, especially in high-threat environments.²⁰ Foreign Service Officer staffing shortages more generally have been an ongoing problem at the State Department in recent years. See the Subcommittee's September 2009 hearing on diplomatic readiness for additional information on the Department's staffing challenges.²¹

Language Proficiency

In a separate 2009 report, GAO found serious language capability gaps within DS. Most significantly, 53 percent of Regional Security Officers (RSOs), who are the lead security representatives at the State Department's overseas missions, did not speak and read at the level required by their positions. Language training was often cut short because the Department is unwilling to leave security positions vacant. GAO found that language capability shortfalls among RSOs could negatively impact U.S. diplomacy, in part because sensitive information in a language other than English may be improperly handled.²² In 2002 and 2006, GAO had released two other reports that found language proficiency gaps at State.²³ The Bureau continues to struggle in meeting its language capability requirements. See the Subcommittee's September 2009 hearing on diplomatic readiness for additional information on the Department's language proficiency challenges.²⁴

Balance of Mission and Security

In 2007, the Center for Strategic and International Studies released a report entitled, "*The Embassy of the Future*." The report made 10 recommendations to modernize and reform the U.S. diplomatic presence abroad. One recommendation suggested that, "the department's security culture and practices must continue to transition from risk avoidance to risk management... Any security philosophy that is based on zero-risk and that judges security-related decisions only to that standard will fail."²⁵ The report emphasized that risk can never be eliminated and that managing risk requires a balance between protecting assets and effectively carrying out the mission. The American Academy of Diplomacy likewise endorsed transitioning

²⁰ GAO-10-156, pp. 21, 24-25, and 32-33.

²¹ S. Hrg. 111-404.

²² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*, Report to the Chairman and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, GAO-09-955, September 2009, pp. 12-14.

²³ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Foreign Language: Human Capital Approach Needed to Correct Staffing and Proficiency Shortfalls*, Report to Congressional Requesters, GAO-02-375, January 2002; and *Department of State: Staffing and Foreign Language Shortfalls Persist Despite Initiatives to Address Gaps*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, GAO-06-894, August 2006.

²⁴ S. Hrg. 111-404.

²⁵ Center for Strategic and International Studies, *The Embassy of the Future*, 2007, p. 50.

from risk avoidance to risk management in its report entitled, “*A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness*,” which was released in 2008.²⁶

Iraq Transition

The Department of State and DS face unprecedented challenges in transitioning from U.S. military dominance to a civilian-led operation in Iraq. As the military withdraws its remaining 50,000 troops by December 2011, State’s presence in Iraq is growing.²⁷ By year’s end, the diplomatic mission will consist of 17,000 personnel on 15 different sites.²⁸ At the same time, significant security threats remain. The number of rocket and mortar attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad – the largest U.S. embassy in the world – rose in 2010. A July 22, 2010 attack on the Embassy killed three and injured 15 security contractors, including two U.S. citizens working for the Embassy.²⁹

The U.S. military’s diminishing role in surveillance, intelligence collection, deterrence, and offensive actions may increase the challenge of ensuring the safety and security of an increasing civilian workforce in Iraq. In addition to providing static and mobile security in multiple high threat locations, DS will also be responsible for many security functions previously performed by the military, including conducting medical evacuations, clearing improvised explosive devices, recovering downed aircraft, and providing quick response teams to fend off attacks.³⁰ In a 2010 letter to the Department of Defense, Ambassador Patrick Kennedy, Under Secretary of State for Management, stated that DS resources are “inadequate to the extreme challenges in Iraq.”³¹ A recent report by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations similarly notes “it is unclear whether the State Department has the capacity to maintain and protect the currently planned diplomatic presence” in Iraq.³²

In responding to the Iraq transition, DS is challenged to increase its capacity and DSTC is challenged to continually reassess and revise its training courses to include new skills and competencies. Future training requirements are expected to further strain DS resources. Without adequate security resources, diplomats may be confined within the walls of their compounds, which could significantly undermine the diplomatic mission in Iraq.

²⁶ American Academy of Diplomacy, *A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness*, October 2008, pp. 16-17.

²⁷ Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, *Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort*, January 2011, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, *Vigilant in an Uncertain World, Diplomatic Security 2010 Year in Review*, 2011, p. 4; see also Tim Arango, “In Rare Deadly Attack, Rocket Hits Iraq’s Green Zone,” *New York Times*, July 22, 2010.

³⁰ Commission on Wartime Contracting, *Better Planning for Defense-to-State Transition in Iraq Needed to Avoid Mistakes and Waste*, July 12, 2010, p. 1.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 2.

³² Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S., *Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort*, January 2011, p. 2.

Contractor Management

To meet its rapidly growing mission, DS relies heavily on contracted security services. The Bureau uses more than 39,000 private contractor employees, representing over 92 percent of its total workforce, to secure facilities, protect diplomats' movements worldwide, and provide support services.³³ According to State, contractors perform essential functions, and their use can be more cost-efficient than establishing a permanent cadre of U.S. direct-hire staff.³⁴ The number of contractors will continue to increase to support Department operations in Iraq as U.S. military forces withdraw.

The Bureau has struggled to maintain the workforce, skill set, and focus on acquisition responsibilities necessary to conduct effective contract oversight. In 2009, the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) reported that DS oversight of security contracts was strained by the rapid growth in contracting and undermined by frequent staff turnover, understaffing, increased workload, inadequate training, and the lack of standardized operating policies and procedures.³⁵ These challenges will increase as security contracts grow.³⁶

Shortcomings in contractor oversight may have contributed to failures in contractor performance. In 2007, contractors with Blackwater Worldwide shot and killed 17 Iraqi civilians while protecting a State convoy. In 2009 and 2010, the OIG found numerous issues including inadequate background investigations of contracted security guards; hiring of contract guards who did not meet English language proficiency requirements; incomplete verification of contracted guards' attendance at posts; poor oversight of contractor work schedules, and use of contractors that struggled to recruit, train, retain, and manage staff with critical skills such as medical technicians, marksmen, interpreters, and dog handlers.³⁷

State has recognized the importance of improving contract oversight. In 2009, the Department established Security Protective Specialist (SPS)³⁸ positions within DS to supplement DS Special Agents' supervision of contractor personnel overseas. Additionally, the Department's QDDR

³³ GAO-11-460, p. 6.

³⁴ Statement by Patrick F. Kennedy, Department of State, Under Secretary for Management, before the Commission on Wartime Contracting, June 6, 2011, pp. 2,4.

³⁵ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Diplomatic Security's Management of Personal Protective Services in Iraq*, MERO-IQO-09-02, January 2009, pp. 5-6.

³⁶ Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Better Planning for Defense-to-State Transition in Iraq Needed to Avoid Mistakes and Waste*, July 12, 2010, p. 6 (noting, "With such a large increase in contract employees, existing weaknesses in contract management and oversight, not to mention funding and hiring challenges, can only grow more troublesome.").

³⁷ United States Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Kabul Embassy Security Force*, MERO-A-10-11, September 2010, p. 1.; U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *The Bureau of Diplomatic Security Baghdad Embassy Security Force*, MERO-A-10-05, March 2010, p. 1.; and U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Performance Evaluation of the Triple Canopy Contract for Personal Protective Services in Iraq*, MERO-IQO-09-03, April 2009, p. 1.

³⁸ SPS are hired as non-career appointees for up to a five-year period, and their primary function is to oversee contractor-operated protective details in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

identified the need to increase the number of contract oversight personnel, ensure they are well trained, and elevate their status within the organization.³⁹

Relevant Legislation

Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act (Public Law 99-399) – Created the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, established the Diplomatic Security Service, and put in place the requirement to conduct an Accountability Review Board in the event of serious injury, loss of life, or significant destruction of property at a U.S. overseas mission.

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³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Leading Through Civilian Power, The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 2010, pp. 180-181.

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**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Ambassador Eric J. Boswell
From Senator Daniel K. Akaka**

**“The Diplomat’s Shield: Diplomatic Security and its Implications for U.S. Diplomacy”
June 29, 2011**

1. You testified about a site on the Eastern Shore of Maryland that was chosen from approximately 40 possible sites for the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, and you discussed how local opposition ultimately derailed that plan. As a result, criteria for site selection were modified to permit consideration of sites farther from Washington, D.C. than originally intended.
 - a. Once the Eastern Shore site proved infeasible, to what extent were the remaining approximately 40 original possible sites reconsidered?

The Department of State and U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) conducted a commercial site solicitation process and moved quickly to identify a site for the new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) facility. Through this process and active real property listings, 30 commercial sites were proposed. These sites were evaluated on the basis of three levels of tiered-criteria. A site was elevated to the next level by successfully adhering to the criteria set forth in that level. Sites that did not meet the criteria of the given level were eliminated from further consideration. Initially, a privately owned site in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland, was chosen as the preferred site in December 2009. An Environmental Assessment through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was initiated to study the site. However, local opposition to the plan, primarily concerns over noise and other disruptions, made progress on the project difficult to ensure. In June 2010, the Queen Anne’s County site was withdrawn from consideration for the FASTC project.

In June 2010, the Presidential Memorandum on Disposing of Unneeded Federal Real Estate directed federal agencies to focus on existing federal facilities to satisfy their facilities needs. In response, the Department re-focused its attention on federally owned and publicly held properties within 220 miles (approximately a four-hour drive) of the Diplomatic Security (DS) Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Therefore, none of the 30 sites from the initial site selection process were considered once the site in Queen Anne’s County was removed from consideration.

- b. When criteria were modified to accommodate a broader search area, were any criteria modified other than the required proximity to Washington, D.C.?

Following the decision to remove the site in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland, from consideration, the Department and GSA jointly developed a four-step site selection and evaluation process. The four steps are to identify candidate sites, evaluate candidate sites for

initial criteria, evaluate sites that meet these criteria with a feasibility study, and finally, evaluate sites that appear feasible by conducting a NEPA study.

Step 1 site evaluation was performed on 41 federally owned or publicly held sites in five states surrounding DS Headquarters to determine whether any of these sites should be studied. In addition to the development of a four-step site selection and evaluation process, some aspects of the site-selection criteria were modified as a result of lessons learned from the project's initial evolution in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. Step 1 criteria include that the properties must be federally owned or publicly held and have a minimum size of 1,500 acres. During the original site-selection process, privately owned, commercial properties that had at least 1,250 acres were considered as possible locations. Potential sites must support the FASTC program of requirements, allow 24/7 operations, and include climate criteria and proximity to the DS Headquarters. Conduciveness to 24/7 operations was not included as part of the initial site selection criteria.

Step 2 criteria include that the site comprise enough developable acreage to house FASTC, with compatible surroundings, access to life support, community support, and favorable developable climate, and it must be easy to acquire. Of the 41 initial sites, two met the criteria in Step 1 and proceeded on to Step 2. Information-gathering workshops were performed to evaluate whether the sites met the Step 2 criteria and would move on to Step 3, a feasibility study. One of the sites, located on the Fort Pickett Virginia Army National Guard Installation, met both Step 1 and Step 2 criteria, and a Step 3 feasibility study has been conducted on the site. The other site, on the Letterkenny Army Depot in south-central Pennsylvania, was evaluated and Step 2 has recently been completed for the site; the evaluation showed that there was insufficient developable acreage for FASTC at this site, as well as extensive wetlands and steep topography. At this time, the FASTC Team is developing a proposal for a path forward.

2. You testified that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) will not be able to meet the requirement in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) for expanded Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) training until a new, consolidated training facility is available. You stated that, even with the new facility, training 10,000 people – the estimated number of people who would take FACT as a result of the QDDR requirement – will likely not be possible. You stated that DS is currently working with the Policy Planning Staff to decide which posts should require FACT training.
 - a. When do you expect this decision to be completed?

Beginning in August, the Department of State will survey personnel at selected posts to solicit views on current threat countermeasures, including the need for additional training. The results of this survey will factor into the risk management review called for in the QDDR. Any recommendations resulting from the risk management review are expected to be presented to the Secretary of State by the end of calendar year 2011.

- b. To what extent will this decision be revisited as threat environments and availability of training resources change?

Threat environments are constantly evaluated at all posts. If warranted, countermeasures and enhanced FACT training could be implemented rapidly to meet heightened threat conditions. As I have testified, the Department expanded FACT training in November 2010 to include personnel assigned to the Mexican border posts.

3. Your written testimony (p. 3) discussed the implementation of a new specialized security immersion training course for personnel assigned to Iraq, expected to begin this summer, which is separate from the FACT course.
- a. What does this course entail, and to what extent does it include foreign language training?

The Iraq Field Immersion Training (IFIT) course is a two-day security and life-safety course that will introduce security, safety and protection concepts to all Chief of Mission personnel assigned to Iraq. The training will then be reinforced through practical applications. Moreover, the training will help Iraq-bound employees to better understand the DS mission and to foster teamwork with DS agents in Protective Security Details (PSDs). IFIT will prepare the students for their unique service in Iraq by developing their security knowledge and skills through classroom instruction, practical exercises, and role-based scenarios.

- *Day One* will involve training in mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicle rollover; helicopter operations; organization and role of a PSD; and emergency drills, such as responding to duck-and-cover and indirect fire warning alarms.
- *Day Two* will consist of scenarios simulating meetings with Iraqi government officials and civilians intertwined with PSD movements and other security exercises that reinforce the training blocks from day one and appropriate segments from the five-day course held the previous week at FSI for all Iraq-bound civilians. The course does not provide any language training.

- b. To what extent is this training provided to security contractors who will be deployed to Iraq?

Security contractors under the Department's World-wide Protective Services contracts will not attend this course. Department policy states that anti-terrorism and security training is the responsibility of the commercial firm and should be written into the contracts.

- c. Are there, or will there be, similar courses for other high-threat areas such as Afghanistan? If not, why not?

The IFIT course is being used as a model to design a similar course for personnel assigned to Afghanistan.

4. You testified that DS is working with the Foreign Service Institute to determine ways to track and receive feedback from non-State personnel who take DS training. Please discuss any progress that has been made and when DS expects to fully address this challenge.

The DS Training Center (DSTC) is working with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to host and deploy surveys and testing via the FSI Learning Management System (LMS):

- The FSI internet Learning Management System (LMS) currently delivers surveys via e mail to State and non-State students on training relevance and effectiveness. DSTC is moving to begin use of this survey function starting in October. The FSI LMS can deliver surveys before, during, and after a course.
 - In addition, DS has purchased a software package that has a testing capacity that should improve test development and analysis for its instructor-led and online training. DS has requested approval from the Department's IT Change Control Board for this new software.
5. DS has, to date, hired approximately 50 Special Protective Specialists (SPSs). The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *Diplomatic Security, Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts* (GAO-11-460) notes that DS had a goal of filling 84 SPS positions in Iraq, although your written testimony indicates that that goal is now 68.

- a. How many SPS positions are required in Iraq, and what is the reason for the difference in the numbers in the GAO report and in your testimony?

DS responds to the operational needs of the assigned mission. As program requirements at Post have been refined and updated, the number of SPS personnel required to support the program has accordingly decreased.

- b. To what extent does DS face difficulties in hiring and deploying Security Protective Specialists, and what is DS doing to address these challenges?

Because of the highly specialized requirements of the position, only a small number of applicants meet the minimum qualifications. To address this recruitment challenge, DS has undertaken several initiatives. DS now routinely recruits and conducts outreach programs at U.S. military installations to highlight the program. SPS and Special Agents have conducted numerous "informational sessions" at posts overseas to targeted audiences of private security and military personnel. DS has modified the vacancy announcement to ensure that the benefits and allowances of the position are prominently displayed to prospective applicants. The requirements of the position have been revised to ensure that those with appropriate military and/or law enforcement background are provided an opportunity to apply. Finally, to compensate for those with less experience in protective security, DS has increased its 12-week SPS course to 16 weeks.

6. During this Subcommittee's 2009 hearing (S. Hrg. 111-461), GAO testified that staffing challenges were causing State to fill overseas positions with less experienced officers,

and you indicated that the Bureau was addressing this experience gap by increasing training and mentoring programs.

- a. Please provide a status update on the total number of DS overseas positions filled by agents below the position's grade.

Currently, there are a total of 882 overseas DS special agent positions. There are 143 overseas DS special agent positions filled by employees below the grade level of the position, which represents 16 percent of the total overseas DS special agent positions.

- b. How are training and mentoring programs being used to address this gap?

DS Senior Management in conjunction with DS Career Development and Assignment Division carefully identifies personnel capable of serving in what is referred to as a "stretch assignment". DS Career Development and Assignment Division works with personnel to ensure that they have the necessary training to succeed in their positions. Training includes leadership training and other supervisory and management courses offered through the Foreign Service Institute as well as courses offered through the Diplomatic Security Training Center.

Mentoring at the State Department takes many forms, to suit the varied needs of Department personnel. DS Foreign Service personnel are assigned a mentor through the State Department Foreign Service Mentoring Program. Throughout the employee's Foreign Service career, a mentor provides career development and guidance to the mentee. Furthermore, at post, the regional security officer provides informal mentoring to his/her staff to help in both the agent's professional development and meeting the needs of the mission.

7. You testified that efforts are underway to support those with psychological health issues resulting from high-threat service. What steps are State and DS taking to minimize the stigma associated with seeking psychological support services?

Within the Mental Health Services section of the Office of Medical Services, the State Department created the Deployment Stress Management Program (DSMP) in 2006. The DSMP supports the psychological health of Foreign Service Officers, Department of State (DOS) and USAID employees, who are or will be assigned to high stress / high threat / unaccompanied tours; support is also available to the families of these employees. DS also has a peer support group, which is a non-medical resource outside of MED services. Both the DSMP and the DS Support Group are confidential avenues of assistance, and the overall team works diligently to overcome any stigma associated with seeking mental health care. The programs are flexible and tailored to the needs of the employee and his/her family.

The Office of Medical Services and DS have issued separate Department Announcements to our employees addressing the impact of mental health counseling on continued security clearance eligibility. Specifically, our employees were advised that the need for counseling to assist in the normal adjustment during or following service in a stressful environment should not deter an employee from seeking mental health counseling and treatment. In a Department Notice, Secretary Clinton also notified employees that the Department is committed to ensuring that all

members of the State Department and the USAID family have the support they need. Moreover, our employees were informed that seeking help is a sign of responsibility and it is not a threat to an employee's security clearance, and receiving recommended treatment for mental health concerns is a favorable factor during security clearance determinations.

8. In high-threat environments, the need to keep people safe may conflict with the demands of the diplomatic mission. What policies and standards are in place to guide Chief of Missions and Regional Security Officers in balancing security and the mission?

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9. In April 2010, the GAO issued a report, entitled *Contingency Contracting: Improvements Needed in Management of Contractors Supporting Contract and Grant Administration in Iraq and Afghanistan* (GAO-10-357), which found that DS hired a personal services contractor to serve as a deputy program manager, a responsibility that involved providing management oversight and evaluating the performance of a contractor in Iraq. I understand that DS is currently establishing a cadre of Government Technical Monitors who are independent contractors that assist DS in contract oversight functions. However, on March 2, 2011, Ambassador Patrick F. Kennedy testified before the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations that State does not have contractors overseeing contractors.
 - a. What role, if any, do contractors, including personal services and independent contractors, play in assisting with the oversight of other DS contractors, particularly those in Iraq and Afghanistan?

DS hires personal services contractors to serve as Government Technical Monitors (GTM) in Iraq and Afghanistan. Personal services contractors are U.S. government employees, not independent contractors nor third-party contractors. They can perform inherently governmental functions consistent with the statutory authority under which they were hired. There are 11 GTM positions covering the seven task orders in both countries. The GTMs work for the Office of Protective Operations (DS/IP/OPO). They assist the DS Agent Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) on the ground in performing contractor oversight by providing a permanent government presence at camps for the guards, conducting routine inventories, verifying compliance with record keeping, retrieving documents for the government, observing and monitoring training requirements, and assisting with quarterly performance management reviews.

In the Office of Overseas Protective Operations, third-party contractors assist direct-hire desk officers and branch chiefs with general contract administrative management, administrative invoice review, and training reviews. OPO has replaced some third-party contractors with personal services contractors to ensure that inherently governmental activities are covered appropriately and to reduce costs.

- b. To the extent that contractors assist in contract oversight, what steps is DS taking to mitigate the risks associated with using contractors for such functions?

All contract management decisions, formal correspondence with the contractors, and all inherently governmental functions are carried out by direct-hire personnel and personal services contract personnel. Third-party contractors employed by DS/IP/OPO are overseen and directed in their work by direct-hire personnel and personal service contractors. At no point is a third-party contractor allowed to represent the government, make substantive program decisions, or commit government resources.

- c. To what extent, if any, do these steps include plans to reduce the use of contractors assisting with contract oversight and administration?

DS/IP/OPO has a robust mixture of direct-hire employees, personal services contractors, and third-party contract personnel. This group manages the contract task orders supporting our security operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In FY 2011, OPO requested and received five additional civil service positions to oversee contract operations. OPO has replaced some third-party contractors with personal services contractors to ensure that inherently governmental activities are covered appropriately and to reduce costs.

Currently, there are 40 direct-hire employees, 52 personal services contractors, and 22 third-party contractors on staff.

10. In discussing how DS will operate in Iraq after the loss of key U.S. military capabilities, you testified that "as Iraq normalizes as a nation, we are going to rely... on the Iraqi forces and the Iraqi police for these functions to the maximum extent that we can."

- a. As DS makes staffing and resource decisions, what assumptions are being made regarding the willingness and ability of Iraqi forces and police to support and protect U.S. diplomatic efforts, and what is the basis for those assumptions?

The overarching assumption is that the security of the U.S. Mission in Iraq is the responsibility of the host government, as is the case with all our diplomatic posts overseas. In this regard we work closely with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to coordinate our joint efforts to provide the highest possible level of security for our personnel and facilities. However, the ISF face a broad range of challenges, including continued attacks, while still developing their own skills and capabilities.

- b. If Iraqi capabilities ultimately fall short of current assumptions, how will this impact DS operations in Iraq?

The continued development of the ISF is one of our Embassy's most critical objectives and will be carried out through programs such as the State-led Police Development Program and the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq. However, we expect to face continued significant threats in Iraq as the ISF continue building their skills and capacity.

For this reason DS is taking unprecedented measures to protect all diplomatic personnel and facilities in Iraq. For example, we are obtaining 60 mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles from DoD to be used for special missions. We use unmanned aerial vehicles to conduct route reconnaissance and over-watch of our facilities and protective security details. We operate detection and warning systems to alert us to indirect fire. We are expanding air and ground quick-response force capabilities and establishing tactical operations centers at each of our sites in Iraq. Finally, we are deploying more than 5,000 contract security personnel under DS supervision to provide protective movement and static security for our personnel and facilities.

11. According to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations January 2011 report entitled *Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort* (S. Prt. 112-3), Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Thomas Nides stated:

The Department of Defense (DoD) does not currently have the authority to transfer 'non-excess' property. Therefore, for items identified as 'Non-excess' the Department of State (DOS) will either have to fund those items or DoD may require exceptional, temporary authorities to transfer them to the Department of State at no cost. Giving DoD such authority would greatly facilitate such transfers.

(p. 17) I understand that, since January, State and DoD have continued to establish and strengthen agreements regarding the leasing and purchasing of DoD assets that have improved DS's access to needed equipment.

- a. What challenges does DS currently face in receiving needed equipment from DoD in Iraq?

DS, along with other Department of State stakeholders, is working effectively and in close partnership with its DoD counterparts on the loan and transfer of security related equipment and expertise. As examples, DoD is lending 60 mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles to DS, biometric data input equipment, and granting access to DoD data bases to support vetting and identification of prospective locally employed staff. DoD is also lending components of their counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar system to support the establishment of a sense-and-warn capability to alert us to indirect rocket and mortar fire.

Support for this equipment will be provided in part through DoD contracts managed by the U.S. Army's Rock Island Contracting Command. DoD's Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP IV) contract, which will provide base life support to U.S. Mission Iraq through a State Department task order, also will support the sustainment of DoD loaned and transferred equipment.

- b. What specific new authorities, if any, should be considered to address challenges in transferring property from DoD to State?

At this time DS has no need for new authorities with respect to the loan or transfer of equipment and property from DoD to State.

12. The Senate Foreign Relations report (S. Prt. 112-3, p. 8) raised concerns about State's ability to sustain air transport capabilities throughout Iraq as the U.S. military withdraws.

- a. What challenges does DS, in partnership with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) air transportation program, face in providing air transportation in support of diplomatic objectives throughout Iraq without U.S. military support?

The challenges that DS and INL Office of Aviation (INL/A) face for the air program in Iraq are to implement the following capabilities currently provided by DoD:

- Airfield security at the major "air hubs." The Regional Security Officers (RSOs) at each air hub, in concert with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO), developed a security perimeter and plans for protection of the personnel and air assets at each location. The plan includes a 24/7 guard force and support vehicles for protection at the facilities.
- Medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of critically ill or injured personnel throughout the country to Diplomatic Support Hospitals (DSHs). A 24/7 dedicated air MEDEVAC capability is being implemented at the three major air hubs for transport of ill or injured personnel to the DSHs. The Embassy is contracting medical support for the DSHs and will use commercial air-ambulance services to transport the critically ill or injured out of the country.
- Air Quick-Reaction Force (QRF) support for protective security details protecting personnel traveling by road. Aerial reconnaissance of the route and overhead protection are provided by the helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), because of the number of moves conducted in urban environments. DS, RSO Baghdad, and INL/A also developed a helicopter response team for extraction of personnel. This capability will

soon be implemented in the north and south to provide the same capability in all air hub locations as DoD withdraws from Iraq.

- Downed aircraft recovery of personnel by the Quick-Reaction Force. A dedicated team capability is being implemented at all air hubs to provide for the recovery of downed aircraft personnel.
 - b. How will DS, in partnership with INL, ensure that air transportation, including helicopter transportation, will be secure from attacks?

Unfortunately, there is always a risk that aircraft may be attacked; however, we are working together to mitigate this risk. DS and INL/A have an excellent working relationship in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) in Baghdad, and this same capability is being developed for the north and south as the TOCs are stood up at each location. Additionally, the aircraft are outfitted with equipment to counter attempts to shoot them down.

